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## THE BELLE OF THE SEASON.

By W. E. CHADWICK.

### CHAPTER XIV.

I tell thee thou'rt dead.

Scott.

As Lady Rosenbury conducted the Lady Geraldine to their waiting carriage from Walter's studio, she felt a personal humiliation in the return of Lorraine—so deeply did she sympathize with the young artist. She had seen his sudden look of despair, and well understood its cause, and her heart bled for the anguish which she believed to be without consolation.

She had thought that the artist, with his great genius and personal beauty, might have won the heart of her lovely companion, but knowing the pride of the Lindens, she had no hope that such love, had Geraldine felt any, would survive an introduction to Lorraine as Walter's father.

"Poor Walter!" she sighed, as they seated themselves in the carriage and drove homewards. "I thought his father was dead. It's a pity he didn't die!"

"It must be humiliating to Mr. Lorraine to have such a parent," replied the Lady Geraldine, in her low even tones, unbroken by the faintest emotion. "It seems incredible that that man can be his father!"

Lady Rosenbury sighed, deeply, mentally deciding that her companion did not love Walter, and hardly knowing whether to rejoice or grieve over her supposed discovery.

Her sympathies, however, were all with Walter, and she resolved to do everything in her power to mitigate the terrible disappointment which had befallen him, but her manner was as cordial and tender as usual when she set Geraldine down at Lindenwood House.

The Lady Geraldine made her adieux in a thoughtful and abstracted manner, which did not depart even when she entered her morning-room and flung herself into a chair.

In truth, she was wondering what the artist had been about to say when Lorraine interrupted them.

Skilled as was the charming belle in all the signs of love, she had not detected that Walter loved her. Whether it was that she deemed her rank an effectual barrier between them, whether she estimated her attractions below their value, or whether her eyes were blinded because her own affections were enlisted, time alone could show.

But whatever its subject, she sank into a reverie that had in it more of sadness than joy.

Suddenly a light tap was heard at the door, and a pleasant voice inquired:

"Are you here, Lady Geraldine? May I come in?"

Geraldine replied in the affirmative.

The next moment the owner of the voice entered. She was Mrs. Tomlins, an educated, refined woman, of middle age, who had formerly been the governess to the Lady Geraldine, and who was now retained by her former charge as a companion and friend.

She was devotedly attached to the beautiful heiress, and was loved in return; but the Lady Geraldine's strong, native sense and superior judgment were her own best advisers, and her companion was completely ignorant of the tendencies of her heart.

"You have been out, Lady Geraldine?" she said, glancing at the bonnet and pailot which had not yet been removed. "I have been looking for you. The earl has sent his page to request your attendance in the library!"

"Has he?" inquired the lady, indifferently. "Is the earl better, Mrs. Tomlins?"

"The page says he is about the same. He certainly must have a fearful headache. I hope he won't be seriously ill!"

Geraldine made no reply.

The affection existing between her and the earl was not worthy the name. It is true that his lordship had made efforts to win her love, but there was so little heart in his demonstrations that the clear-sighted maiden had treated them with silent indifference. But, although she did not yield him the affection of a niece, she willingly gave him the respect and obedience due him as her uncle and personal guardian.

"I will go down and see my uncle now, Mrs. Tom-

lins," she said, at length, removing her street garments. "Is he alone?"

"Yes, my lady—quite alone!"

The Lady Geraldine gave a few touches to her toilet, and proceeded to the library, where she found the earl alone and awaiting her.

He was as nervous and apprehensive in his manner as when Lord Rosenbury visited him some hours earlier, but his face was far more haggard and ghastly, and his eyes had a wilder and more troubled expression.

Geraldine was startled at the change in his aspect. "Why, uncle," she exclaimed, "you are very ill! Have you sent for a physician?"

"Nonsense. I am not ill!" returned the earl, seeming annoyed. "The truth is, Geraldine, I exerted myself too much last night, and the excitement has brought on that old pain at my heart!"

As he spoke, he pressed his hand against his side.

"Ought you not to see a physician about that pain, uncle?"

"No, no. Doctors are all alike. They like to make out a bad case. Why, Horton, our family physician, you know, says I have got heart-disease! Oh, they are all blunderers, and worse!"

The Lady Geraldine looked grave.

She remembered that Dr. Horton, a most learned and skilful physician, had said several months before that the earl was afflicted with heart-disease, and he had added privately, in addressing her, that a sudden and terrible shock might kill him.

"I wish you would send for Dr. Horton, uncle," she said, with some concern.

"Nonsense, Geraldine. I am all right. I wish to talk of something else—of a subject that is very near my heart! I sent for you some time ago, but Mrs. Tomlins could not find you in the house."

"I have been out, and have just returned."

The earl gave her a quick, suspicious glance. "Been out?" he repeated. "Where have you been?"

A sudden flush stained the maiden's cheek, but it was gone before it was noticed, and she replied:

"I visited the studio of Mr. Lorraine to look at his new picture."

The earl looked unsatisfied, and demanded:

"Was that the only place you visited?"

"The only one."

His lordship began to look relieved, and asked:

"Who went with you?"

"Lady Rosebury. Her ladyship called for me to go with her, the picture now belonging to her."

"Oh, that's very well, Geraldine. I am glad to see you so intimate with Lady Rosebury. She is a charming and very lovely woman. Did—did you see or meet anybody while you were out? Was—was anybody hanging about the house when you returned?"

The maiden began to fear that the earl was losing his senses—his questions were so strange, and his manner so nervous and disjointed.

"I saw no one lurking about the house, nor did I meet any one whom I knew," she responded, gently, determined to humour his mood. "But why do you ask such strange questions, uncle?"

The earl glanced over his shoulder, and at the windows where the curtains had been closely drawn, and then he replied, with a forced laugh:

"Strange questions? Are they strange? Well, I didn't know but some thief might be thinking of entering the house. You have a great many jewels, Geraldine, and there is a great deal of family plate, and I shouldn't be surprised if an attempt were made to steal them."

This explanation by no means satisfied the maiden. "Such fears are groundless, uncle," she said. "I have had my jewels a long time, for they were my mother's, and the plate has been in the family for many years. Why this sudden anxiety about them?"

"Oh, you couldn't understand if I was to explain the case," returned the earl, impatiently, and as if desirous of changing the subject. "Besides, I have no wish to alarm you. Let us proceed to the business for which I desired your presence. But draw your chair a little nearer."

The maiden did so, while the earl seemed to crouch into the depths of his great cushioned chair.

"The curtains are down, Geraldine?"

"Yes, uncle, and the room is quite gloomy. You would feel better to have more light. Let me draw aside just one of the curtains."

"Not for the world—not for the world!" cried the earl, stretching out his hand to detain her as she half-turned. "I don't want the light. I won't have it."

"Very well, uncle," said Geraldine, soothingly, endeavouring to conceal her surprise at his strange comment. "If you prefer this gloom, I would not touch the curtains."

The earl sank back into the depths of his chair, and drew a breath of relief.

"My dear Geraldine," he said, after a pause, "I have been a father to you, have I not, since I became your guardian?"

"You have been very kind to me," assented the maiden.

"Have I not done everything that a father would have done for your education, Geraldine? The governess selected for you by your dear mother, the late countess, has been continued in her post by me, and you have had the first masters in all accomplishments."

"It is true," replied the wondering Geraldine.

"I have never hesitated to fulfil all your desires as soon as they were uttered," continued the earl, seeming to find comfort in reflecting upon his just dealings with his niece. "You desired to spend a year or two abroad, to have the advantages of travel before entering society, and I accompanied you. In fact, Geraldine, have you ever named a wish which I have not gratified?"

Geraldine reflected a moment, and then replied:

"You are right, uncle. You have been very indulgent to me. But why do you recall all this?"

"Because I wish to show you that I have acted as a father to you, and have a right to your filial obedience and trust!"

"But have I not always been obedient, uncle?" demanded the Lady Geraldine. "If you have done your duty to me, have I failed in mine to you?"

"No, no, Geraldine. You have been always good, always noble. I was not thinking of the past, but of the future. To come to the point, my dear child, you are now nineteen years of age, and are in the height of your first season, a beauty and a belle. You have received eligible offers, which you have seen fit to decline. Heretofore, I have found no fault with you for these refusals. On the contrary, I have rejoiced in them, they giving me hope of keeping you with me for some years yet to brighten my loneliness. But such hopes are selfish. If Dr. Horton's words were to prove true, and if I have really heart-disease, you are liable to be left without a relative at any period. Therefore, I desire to see you married!"

The Lady Geraldine blushed, but remained silent.

"Tell me, my child," continued the earl, anxiously, "are you heart-free?"

The quick flushes on the maiden's face deepened, and her head sank lower upon her breast.

Unused as was the earl to reading the workings of a woman's heart, he could not fail to read aright these indications in Geraldine.

"You do love some one then, my dear?" he said, a look of pleasure flashing across the sombreness of his countenance. "I am glad to find it so. Who is it you love?"

He waited in vain for a reply.

"Is it he of whom you spoke last evening, Geraldine?"

A slight inclination of the head answered him.

"And yet, from some womanly caprice, you have rejected him? Ah, like all women, you like to feel your power, Geraldine! As perfect as you seem, you like to play with the heart you have caught, my dear. Well, well, a word will recall him—"

"To whom do you refer, uncle?" asked Geraldine, lifting her head.

"Why, you pretty coquette, to Lord Rosebury, of course! Did you not confess your love for him last evening, and on my mentioning his name, did not your pride and modesty take the alarm, and you deny the love you had just confessed? He loves you as much as you love him—"

"You are mistaken, uncle," interrupted Geraldine. "I do not love Lord Rosebury in the least. I do not regard him with more than common friendship. He understands my sentiments towards him, and has ceased to expect from me any return for his love."

"It is you who are mistaken, Geraldine," responded the earl. "Or are you simply playing the coquette?"

"Not I!" replied the maiden, with a slight hauteur. "You know, uncle, that I always speak the truth—even in jest—and therefore you can implicitly believe me when I repeat that I do not love Rosebury, and that my refusal of his hand was final!"

The earl could not resist the conviction that she meant what she said, and that the suit of Lord Rosebury would receive no encouragement from her.

He frowned darkly at her, and his tones were discordant, as he said:

"But, Geraldine, I saw Rosebury before he left, and gave him hope that he would win you!"

"Then you must see him, uncle, and take back the encouragement you gave him!"

"That I cannot, will not do! It is essential to my happiness and welfare that you should marry him. Is he not in every way an eligible match for even the Lady Geraldine Summers?" He is the last scion of the ancient House of Rosebury, the bearer of that honourable name and title, and owner of the Rosebury estates. What can you wish for more?"

"I will tell you," responded Geraldine, her face glowing with emotion. "I should want in the one I love a heart to feel for the woes of others, a heart to love and cherish me, a soul to appreciate all that is beautiful and sublime, and a mind that is elevated and aspiring. These requirements Lord Rosebury lacks. He is well enough, perhaps, in his way, but I cannot accept him!"

"I am to understand, then, that he to whom you have given your heart, Geraldine, has all these qualifications," remarked his lordship, sneeringly. "Tell me, Geraldine, are you engaged to marry any one?"

"I am not!"

"Then listen to me," said the earl, with evident relief. "It is absolutely necessary to me, Geraldine, that you wed with Lord Rosebury. I appeal to that filial obedience you have ever shown towards me!"

"Why is this marriage so necessary to you, uncle?"

The earl hesitated, but a glance at the determined countenance of the maiden decided him to be frank, and he replied:

"Because I am in debt—greatly in debt! I have managed to keep my creditors at bay, but when the session of Parliament is over, I know not what may happen. I must have aid from some quarter. Rosebury is devotedly in love with you, and hearing of my embarrassments has offered to settle fifty thousand pounds upon me on the day you marry him. This will not only relieve me from all my debts, but will give me a handsome surplus upon which, with my rents and other sources of income, I can live handsomely!"

"So Lord Rosebury would purchase his wife!" commented the Lady Geraldine, with a smile. "He shall not outbid me, dear uncle. I have a fortune of over a hundred thousand pounds, and you shall have half of that sum. You should have applied to your niece rather than a stranger!"

"You cannot carry out your generous design, Geraldine," replied the earl, with bitter emphasis. "It is out of your power. You are not yet of age. You cannot sign away any of your money, not even to me!"

"But you can use what you need, uncle—"

"You forget that I am only your guardian—not the guardian of your fortune. It is looked after and guarded by three gentlemen, who would lose every penny of their own before one penny of yours should be wrongfully used or in any way misapplied. Generous as you are, my dear Geraldine, you can assist me only by accepting Rosebury!"

"But if I were to marry some one else, I could bestow the money upon you, uncle? Once married, I could give you what I liked!"

"Your husband would object to such generosity, Geraldine. Very few men would willingly lose fifty thousand pounds at one stroke. Besides, I have been thinking, since Rosebury left me, that you cannot give away such sums at all, and that the money would have to come from Rosebury's own fortune!"

Geraldine looked disappointed.

"I would have helped you if I could, uncle," she said. "Can you not economise in some way so that your rents may pay your debts?"

"Nonsense. That is a woman's refuge—economy! I must keep on living, and I will not drag out my existence on any of my estates without company and in economy. If you really desire to aid me, you will marry Rosebury!"

"I cannot!" replied the maiden, firmly. "To do so would be to act contrary to all the teachings I ever received from my dear parents. They enjoined me never to wed any one to whom I could not give my heart. Their married life was blissful, because they loved each other, and I am sure if my father, whom I remember better, were still alive, he would tell me I am doing right in rejecting Lord Rosebury!"

The earl groaned, and hid his ghastly countenance with his hands.

There was a short pause, and then he lifted his face, saying:

"I am in the place of your father now, Geraldine, and my commands are as if they come from him. You remember how often, and how tenderly he spoke to you of his younger brother?"

Geraldine assented.

"Had he known that that brother was to succeed him, he would hardly have settled so much property even upon his daughter; but he thought me dead, and supposed that a distant kinsman would take his name and place. His fond care for you, Geraldine, was gross injustice to me."

"But you have the entailed estates?"

"Very true; still I am in debt, and in urgent need of money. You must marry Rosebury. As your uncle, your guardian, your second father, I demand your obedience!"

The Lady Geraldine grew pale as she comprehended what a conflict there was likely to be between their two wills, each, perhaps, equally determined, and she replied:

"The days of forced marriages have gone by for ever, uncle! And I question if even Lord Rosebury would drag an unwilling bride to the altar!"

"You will brave me then, Geraldine?"

"I will not marry Rosebury!"

The earl's countenance became fairly livid with rage.

Totally unused to the slightest contradiction, he had expected that he had but to command, and the Lady Geraldine would yield a cheerful if unwilling obedience.

"Take care, take care, my lady!" he said, hoarsely. "You have yet to learn what it is to brave my authority. You fancy that I have no means to compel you to obedience—but you will soon find yourself mistaken!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the undaunted maiden. "How can you force me to marry a man whom you have made hateful to me by your threats—a man whom I begin to cordially detest? You may drag me to the altar, but can you make me yield assent to the questions of the clergyman, or can you find one who will not give me his protection when I claim it? I would have assisted you in your pecuniary troubles if I could, but as to your threats, I defy you to execute them!"

"And this is your decision?"

"It is."

Lindenwood realized that the dauntless spirit of the Lady Geraldine was not to be lightly intimidated, but he could not realize at once the strong and patient resolution of which she was capable.

He believed that as women were physically weaker than men, their courage was proportionately less, and that a long and determined exercise of authority could break down the strongest will a woman ever possessed.

Whether he was mistaken or not, he had yet to prove.

Geraldine did not quail before his angry gaze, nor did her eyelids droop, and the earl became thoughtful.



He wondered who was the person who had won her love, and whether this person might not soon declare an answering passion for her. Becoming alarmed at this thought, he reflected whether it was not possible to remove her a few days from any possibility of encountering her unknown lover until he had subjected her will to his own.

He had other and more powerful reasons for wishing to absent himself from London for a week—reasons which now made him baggard and sleepless, and plunged him in a terrible anguish.

"Geraldine," he said at length, "can nothing move you to consent to my dearest wish! Oh, how my heart pains me! Will you not, to save my life from this fearful disease, praying upon me, do what I desire? Will you kill me by your disobedience?"

"Not willingly, dear uncle!" said Geraldine, moved to tears at this appeal and the earl's supposed suffering. "I would do anything short of perjury myself to make you happy. Command me in anything else, and I will obey. In this thing alone I refuse to obey you!"

The earl groaned, and pressed his hands to his side against his heart, which beat quite disturbedly.

Moved with compassion, the Lady Geraldine arose and laid her hand on his hot brow, as if to dispel the headache under which he suffered, and also to express her tender pity for his terrible malady.

The maiden was usually chary of her caresses, and not more than once or twice in the course of her existence had she bestowed them upon her uncle, but desiring to soften the blow of her continued refusal, her heart prompted her to bestow a daughter's tenderness upon him.

"Oh, uncle, can't I do something to ease that terrible pain?" she asked, in a trembling tone. "Can't Dr. Horton help you?"

"I saw him the other day," faltered the earl, "and he advised me to run out in the country for a week. He says this hot dusty air is very bad for me, and I should have a little rest. But I cannot go—"

"Oh, yes, uncle! Oh, yes, you can!" exclaimed the Lady Geraldine, falling into the trap as her uncle had expected. "Let us go immediately. Let us start in the morning. I will go with you, uncle, so as to cheer you if you should be lonely, and a few days in the fresh, sweet air would restore you to yourself. Indeed, you do not know how badly you look. Let us hasten, uncle, to follow the doctor's advice."

"Since you insist upon it, I yield. But where shall we go, Geraldine?"

"Why, to your estate on the sea-coast, uncle—to Rock Land, of course, where you will have the salt air and sea-breezes. Will you go to-morrow, uncle?"

"Yes, Geraldine. Can you be ready by to-morrow?"

The maiden assented.

"Then leave me now, my child, that I may try to sleep a little before my journey. Let your maid pack to-night what few things you will need for a week's stay at Rock Land. But will you not be lonely there, Geraldine, with no one but me, and with no near neighbours?"

"No, uncle. I am only too glad to have an opportunity of doing something for your comfort!"

The Lady Geraldine kissed the fevered forehead on which her hands had rested, and retreated to her own apartments to give directions for the proposed journey.

When the door had closed behind her, the earl's eyes brightened fitfully, and a triumphant smile curved his lips as he muttered:

"My heart-disease, with which Horton has frightened me, has served me one good purpose at least. Geraldine will go with me to Rock Land, the loneliest and most secluded of all my possessions, and there I shall have an opportunity of breaking her will! She shall yield to me, or she shall die! I will remain until—until this horrible weight, this awful fear, departs from me!"

He glared about him in the semi-darkness of the library like a wild animal brought to bay, and almost as if he expected some dreaded shape to appear from the depths of the gloom.

As soon as he could control his singular nervousness, he summoned his page and commanded him to light the gas, which was done. And then, as if fearful that the glare would attract some dreaded enemy, or reveal him too plainly to menacing eyes, he had it toned down, and the windows more securely covered.

His next movement was to write a note to Lord Rosbury to the effect that he was about to visit one of his estates for the purpose of trying the effect of a few days' seclusion upon his obdurate niece, and that he would soon let him know the result. Having sent this to be posted, he gave his mind up completely to the apprehensions that had occupied him during the day.

At an early hour the next morning, the carriage was brought around to the door, the page was sent

by his master to see that no one was lurking in the vicinity, and with unseemly haste the earl made his way from the door to the carriage while the Lady Geraldine and Mrs. Tomlins followed him at a more leisurely pace.

The page mounted with the coachman, and the carriage set out for the station, leaving the maid of the Lady Geraldine to follow with the luggage.

During the transit from Lindenwood House to the station, the earl remained in his corner, with the blinds drawn, and apparently full of apprehension lest some one should suddenly stop the carriage and confront him.

Arrived at the station, the page was again made to look up and down the platform, and describe the appearance of the various loungers, before the earl himself thrust out his head from the carriage window, and took a hasty survey of the scene.

The page ascribed this conduct to a fear of duns from his lordship's many creditors, and even Geraldine shared that opinion.

The transit was made between the carriage and waiting-room at last, but the Lady Geraldine noticed that her uncle's nervousness seemed to increase until the moment of departure, and that he did not breathe freely until they were seated in the train and whirling along towards Rock Land.

## CHAPTER XV.

Oh my soul's joy!

If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have wakened death!

Othello.

Equality is no rule in love's grammar.

Beaumont and Fletcher.

Nor until they were fairly on their way to the sea-coast did Parkin venture to ask of his young master, Walter Lorraine, the place of their destination, and he then did so in order to break upon the gloom in which the young artist was enshrouded.

"We are going to the east coast, Parkin," was the artist's reply, "to a wild and romantic spot, where there are chalk cliffs, and rocks, and caverns hollowed out by the waves—a place where you cannot fail to learn much and enjoy yourself. There is a small village three miles distant from the spot where we shall encamp, and quite near us will be the mansion of a nobleman who occasionally visits the place in summer."

"Are you acquainted with the nobleman, sir?" Parkin further ventured to ask.

The artist nodded.

There was a pause, during which the valet watched his master's countenance with a look of wistful affection, and then he broke in upon his sad reverie by asking:

"Is the house a grand one, sir?"

"You will soon see for yourself. It belongs to the Earl of Lindenwood, and the place is called Rock Land."

In making this answer the artist seemed to have recalled some memory of the past, for his face flushed and paled, and became sadder than before.

In fact, the summer previous, attracted by the wild beauty of that part of the coast, he had spent some days in the vicinity of Rock Land, and in one of his frequent excursions among the rocks, had first met the Lady Geraldine Summers. It was there he had begun painting her portrait, an occupation which had lasted many weeks after their return to town, and there that he had begun to love her.

By some strange inconsistency, he had chosen this spot, hallowed by so many memories of her, as a place in which to teach himself to forget her.

The remainder of the journey was made in almost unbroken silence, the valet not daring to intrude further upon his master's thoughts.

On arriving at the little village mentioned, a stout waggon was hired to convey the artist's goods to the coast, and long before sunset his little habitation was ready for use.

The tent had been set up a little way from the shore, in the shadow of a rocky cliff, and having in front of it a broad, uninterrupted view of the German Ocean. The lashing of the waves against the rocks could be continually heard like a strange solemn music that well accorded with the artist's thoughts.

To the left, as Walter looked seaward, rose jagged masses of rock, and to the right the view afforded was much the same, except that the highest rock was crowned by a strange old stone building, which seemed fully in keeping with the wild scene. Its single tower, its quaint windows, and the hoary spots upon its surface, all showed that it was a memento of some past century.

It was the mansion of Rock Land.

Behind it, at some little distance, stretched the green meadows and fertile fields of the estate, and in the further distance were scattered the cottages of the tenants and labourers.

Walter surveyed this to him familiar scene with sad earnestness, and then wandered up and down the shore busy with his thoughts.

While he was thus engaged, the valet occupied himself in putting up the little camp bed for his master's use, getting out books, their stores of provisions, &c., and when Walter at last returned, the carpeted tent had a strangely homelike air.

The next day the artist began a picture, with his easel set up just outside his tent, and endeavoured to interest himself in his task, while his valet, dismissed for the hour, lay in the shadow of the great rocks and read a novel, which he had been provident enough to bring.

When the sun had reached the zenith, however, the easel was put away, and Walter, taking a volume, followed his valet's example, wondering, as he reclined in the shade of the overhanging rocks, why it was that painting and books had alike lost their interest to him.

There was something about his present gipsy-like existence that suited the mood of Walter. He thought that his present free communion with nature would give him the resignation into which he vainly endeavoured to school himself, but he soon began to consider this idea as fallacious.

The afternoon passed, and evening came on—a glorious evening—with the sea and rocks bathed in a flood of moonlight, and the artist's restlessness increased to absolute torture.

As he was about leaving his tent for a stroll, Parkin inquired:

"Have you seen the lights, sir, up at Rock Land? Perhaps the family is there, sir—"

"Oh, no. I left it in London, Parkin. The lights are probably those of the servants!"

The valet, muttered his disappointment at this view of the case, having hoped that his master would find companionship in that lonely spot, and the artist then proceeded on his walk.

He passed along the shore towards the mansion, and at length climbed one of the cliffs and gazed seaward, with his arms folded across his chest.

"This is the spot where I first met the Lady Geraldine!" he said, in a low, tremulous tone. "Here is where I forgot the distance between us, and learned to love her! Would that I might here learn forgetfulness!"

He hardly looked mortal as he stood there with that passionate prayer on his lips, his slender form outlined against the sky, and the soft wind lifting the hair from his forehead. The moonlight gave to his manly beauty a halo that was more than earthly.

He sank down upon a rock, upon which he had once sat with her, and gave himself up to the sadness which possessed his soul.

He was so absorbed in his grief that he did not hear the light footfalls that approached his retreat, and was aroused only by a low-toned exclamation at his side.

Looking up, he beheld the Lady Geraldine.

It would be impossible to tell which was the most surprised and confused at the unexpected meeting, each supposing the other to be in London.

"The Lady Geraldine!" ejaculated Walter. "Is it possible that you are here?"

"I might ask you the same question, Mr. Lorraine," returned the maiden, endeavouring to recover her self-possession. "I came with my uncle to Rock Land for the benefit of the sea air, as he is not well!"

"And I—I came to forget!" said the artist.

He arose as he spoke and offered the Lady Geraldine his seat, which she accepted, her limbs trembling beneath her weight.

"To forget?" repeated the maiden, hardly conscious of what she was saying. "What have you to forget?"

Walter struggled with the emotion that threatened to overcome him, and with impassioned emphasis, exclaimed:

"Nay, I should rather remember, Lady Geraldine—remember my position in the world, my humble birth, and unworthy parent! I am like the child who cried for the moon!"

"I do not understand you!"

"I will explain. It is best you should know the presumption of which I have been guilty. You have always treated me with friendly courtesy, as a lady would treat her portrait-painter," replied Walter, bitterly, "and I have dared to love you! Despise me! Scorn me, Lady Geraldine. I deserve nothing better! And yet words cannot tell you of the worshipping love I bear you! Among all your courtly admirers there is not one who so madly idolizes you—to whom, as to me, you are the sum of all good, the sunlight of existence! Oh, Lady Geraldine—"

Choking with his emotions, he sank at her feet.

"I had not suspected this!" faltered the maiden.

"Of course not. How could you? I have been mad to make this revelation, but the sight of you in this spot has completely unmanned me. Grant me

your pardon, Lady Geraldine, and I leave you for ever. To-morrow I shall leave England, never to return!"

He waited for the pardon which he feared she would not bestow.

"No, Walter," said the Lady Geraldine, trembling and blushing. "You must not go!"

"Must not go! Why—?"

"Because—be generous, dear Walter! Can you not read my heart?"

The young artist listened to these words in a sort of amazement, and regarded her with a wondering surprise; but gradually the truth dawned upon his bewildered soul, and arising from his humble position, he drew her to his breast.

"You love me," he whispered. "Oh, tell me so! I fear I am dreaming—that I have misunderstood you—"

"No, no, dear Walter. I—I love you!"

The confession was made in the lowest and most timid whisper imaginable, but every word reached Walter's ears and thrilled his soul.

He sat down upon the rock, drawing the maiden closer to him.

"This is very like a dream, Lady Geraldine—"

"Nay, Walter, not *Lady*, but Geraldine—your Geraldine!"

"It seems incredible that you can love me!" declared Walter, after a pause in which silence spoke more than words could have done. "Turning from all your noble admirers to bestow your love upon me—"

"The noblest of them all!" interrupted Geraldine, with smiles and tears. "And it seems strange to me that you, with all your genius and goodness, can love me—"

"I came here to-night, darling," said Walter, dwelling upon the tender name as though he would render its sound doubly sweet to her, "to see the spot again where I first met you, and imagine you at my side again! How little did I dream of the blessed reality that would so soon meet me!"

"And I came for the same purpose, dear Walter," returned Geraldine. "I—I have tried to forget you, for I thought you didn't care for me."

"And will you wear my ring, darling? May I give you a betrothal ring?"

The maiden assented.

"But—but my father?" he said, after a pause, remembering Lorraine. "You can never know the anguish I have endured since his call at my studio the other day. I almost fear your pride will conquer your love when I think of him."

The maiden smiled.

"If it were not for your father," she said, "you might never have told me your love. I am not going to marry him, Walter, and so small a drawback upon our happiness can easily be forgotten! My pride, dear Walter, is not so strong as my love!"

The joy Walter felt at this assurance is beyond description.

"What will your uncle say to our engagement, Geraldine?" he asked, after a short silence.

A shadow flitted over the maiden's countenance, but it quickly fled before the light of her new-found happiness.

"I do not know what he will say, Walter," she replied, thoughtfully. "but I fear he will be very angry. He has other views for me."

"Other views?" questioned Walter.

"An explanation of his views is due to you, dear Walter," said the maiden, blushing. "Lord Rosenbury, the very day of his return to town from Rosenbury, offered me his hand in marriage. I refused him, of course, but my uncle declares I shall marry him."

"Is he so much attached to Rosenbury?"

"No, but Lord Rosenbury has taken advantage of his pecuniary embarrassments, and offered to settle fifty thousand pounds upon him on the day I become his lordship's wife. Therefore my uncle is very anxious that I should become Lady Rosenbury."

"But he cannot force you into this marriage!"

"Certainly not, Walter."

"I wish I could offer him fifty thousand pounds," sighed Walter. "Could not your dowry be handed over to him, Geraldine?"

"No. He says it cannot be done. I have already made the offer, Walter. But have no fears that I will yield to this unjust demand. I shall be true to myself."

"And you do not regret your choice?"

"Regret my choice! A thousand times—no!"

"And you will not regret it when the world shall pity you for throwing yourself away upon a low-born painter?" persisted Walter.

"Never, never, dear Walter. I am only too proud of you!"

Walter felt a blissful content as he listened to this assertion. All doubts and fears were now swept from his soul, and he began to realize his great happiness.

"My darling, my own!" he whispered. "And you are to be my wife! Never in any wildest dreams have I dared to picture such a blissful moment as this!"

If he was happy, the maiden was not less so.

For months she had loved him in secret, as deeply and truly as he had loved her, but she had never allowed herself to think that she might be loved in return, and that she might sometime be the wife of Walter Lorraine.

The time flew by unheeded, as they sat upon the lonely rock, breathing their lovers' vows and planning a happy future. In the midst of their pleasant dreams, a window of the mansion was opened, and a voice called:

"Geraldine, Geraldine!"

"It is my uncle's voice!" said the maiden. "He had fallen into a doze in the drawing-room, and I left him to visit this dear old rock. It seems that he has awakened, missed me, and discovered that I am not in the house!"

The summons was repeated.

"I must go, dear Walter," continued the Lady Geraldine. "It must be getting late, and if I am absent longer, my uncle will send some one to search for me!"

"Good night, then, my own darling!" said Walter, lavishing upon her the repressed tenderness of months. "We shall meet again to-morrow!"

Geraldine assented, just as the window of the mansion was hastily closed.

"My uncle is coming to search for me," she said.

"I will be at this same spot to-morrow evening. I fear I cannot leave my uncle in the daytime. To-morrow evening, you shall tell me, Walter, how to act towards him and what course to pursue!"

A lingering good-night was said, the final embrace taken, and Geraldine quitted the spot, not venturing to look behind her.

When she had completely disappeared from his view, Walter found it hard to convince himself that he had not been dreaming, so improbable did it now look to him that he should be beloved by the Lady Geraldine Summers!

He watched the mansion in the hope of seeing some token of her presence therein, and he was not disappointed, for after several minutes, a light flashed from a chamber looking seaward, a window was opened, and Geraldine looked out.

As the maiden noticed his figure on the rock, she flattered her handkerchief in the air once or twice, and then withdrew from his sight.

"My darling will soon be wrapped in her innocent slumbers!" thought Walter, with passionate tenderness, as he waited in vain for her to reappear. "Oh, would it were to-morrow evening, that I might hear her say again she loves me!"

With a happy heart he retraced his steps towards his tent.

(To be continued.)

## A WINTER IN ITALY.

By H. E. S.

(Continued from No. 122.)

### STREET WALKS IN FLORENCE.

CONTINENTAL cities of other days were built for people who rode in coaches—that fact is quite evident in the discomfort of any one to-day who tries to thread them on foot.

In Florence there is one good promenade, a long, broad, flat, sidewalk by the Arno, where the fashionable world walks at fashionable hours; but beside that, the street-walking is execrable. It is true that the whole city, being neatly paved with firm, flat stone, one has none of that fathomless mud which besets one's way sometimes in English cities; but still in wet weather they are damp, dirty, and slippery, and so narrow between the tall houses that the air in them feels like that of a cellar. In many of them there is barely room for two carriages to pass, and the foot passenger must crowd himself flat against the wall to avoid being run over; and often one flies along, stopping now in this doorway, and now in that, and watching one's opportunity to make an advance between the passing of the carts and coaches.

It is with a sensation of relief that one emerges from such critical positions as these, into a grand public square, where one finds more light, air and room to move, without encountering wheels, or heels of horses.

There are two of these great squares which principally excite admiration in Florence. One is that which lies in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, or governmental palace, and which is one of the finest and most interesting public squares in the world; and the other is that lying in front of the beautiful antique church, Santa Maria Novella.

It is an interesting walk to go to the Palazzo

Vecchio, at about ten o'clock in the morning, when the guard are being changed. They march in with sounds of martial music, in full band, and play about half-an-hour, and one can then walk up and down a splendid portico, or loggia, built by Aragona, and look at some of the finest Florentine and antique statuary, and listen to the music.

At all times, even in the middle of winter, your steps are besieged, as you walk, by men and women with baskets of carnations, heliotrope, roses, geraniums, of which you can possess yourself of quite a large bouquet, for about five pence, or six pence.

The Florentines strike one as a quiet, industrious people. Our party, consisting of many, both of gentlemen and ladies, comparing a three months' experience, in which we have traversed the city at all hours of the day and night, have agreed in the perfect security, quiet and safety, in which a person finds oneself here. Since the time that the Grand Duke received his polite dismissal, everything has proceeded with the utmost system and order. Though passing through a period of the most intense uncertainty and excitement, still there has not been one tumultuous scene enacted here. All has been quiet, law and order; and the people now are beginning to inquire, "What do we want of a Grand Duke? We get on better without than with him."

One of the most peculiar of the street sights here in Florence is the passing of the Misericordia. You are stopped, perhaps, somewhere, in a public street, and see passing you, with stately and solemn steps, a body of men clothed in black from head to foot, their faces covered by a black cloth, through which their eyes gleam with a ghostly and sepulchral effect. They bear on their shoulders a black litter, which much resembles a bier.

All make way before them, and uncover their heads in token of respect. This is the Association of the Misericordia—an old charity of some centuries standing here in Florence, and embracing, as we are told, men of the highest rank in society.

Their office is the care of the sick, and the burial of the dead. Enlistment in this society is considered a work of religion; and whenever a man has enrolled his name among them he must go at the ringing of a certain bell to a place of assembly, where the messages of the sick or dying requiring their care are recorded. A certain number are detailed to go to any sick person claiming their care, and solemnly disguised so that no one can recognize their persons, they go with their black litter, in which the sick person is carefully placed, and they bear him away to a hospital, where he receives medical attention and the best of nursing at the expense of the society. If he dies, they attend to his burial—bearing the body through the streets with lighted candles in their hands.

The procession has such a ghostly, mysterious effect, that one cannot but think it must require very firm nerves in a sick person to be thus borne away without so much fear as would half do away the good effects of the charity. The secrecy and romance of the thing no doubt greatly affects the imagination of those enlisting in it. It is a part of the policy of the Romish religion to invest the common acts of charity with some solemn and striking exterior, by which they shall appeal to the romantic part of our nature. The disguise of the person, perhaps, often spares the feelings of the patient, who thus may receive favours from acquaintances and neighbours without knowing himself indebted to any particular individual, but one fancies this good result might be attained without an exterior so fearfully ghostly.

One sign now presented in the streets of Florence marks forcibly to us the difference between the state of the people now and under the reign of the old Grand Duke. One sees to-day on all the walls and in the windows of booksellers an active placarding of pamphlets on the great moral and political questions which are now agitating Italy. We have seen, also, Bibles and Testaments publicly exposed for sale, in company with such books as D'Aubigny's "History of the Reformation." Such straws are auspicious in showing how the wind of public opinion blows.

It is not a mere dead gallery of foreigners one finds now in Florence, but the signs of a people waking up to think—feel on the most important of all subjects for this world and for the next.

(To be continued.)

ECLIPSES IN 1866.—In the year 1866 there will be three eclipses of the sun, namely, on March 16 and April 15, both of which are invisible from Europe. The third will take place on October 8, and is partly visible, as the sun will be eclipsed at the time of sunset. There are two eclipses of the moon, namely, on March 31 and on September 24. The former occurs early in the morning, and the latter is invisible from Europe. The first solar eclipse will take place on March 16, and will be visible from a part of North



America. The second eclipse of the year is that of the moon, on the morning of March 31, visible from England. The third eclipse is of the sun; greatest phase April 25, visible from Australia and the Southern Ocean. The fourth eclipse is of the moon, September 24. It is total. It is invisible from England. The fifth and last of the year is a partial eclipse of the sun, on October 8. It begins at 4-26 p.m.

## BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "Self-Made," "All Alone," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XI.

What see you in these papers that you lose  
So much complexion? Look you, how you change!  
Your cheeks are marble! What read you there  
That hath so cowarded and chased your blood  
Out of appearance? Why, how now? *Shakespeare.*

THE barouche, containing Dr. Rosenthal and his party reached the steamer in such good season, that the two young ladies had time to go down into the cabin, and to make all arrangements for their comfort, and then return to the deck.

They sat down on the side that still looked towards Bellemont College, whose white walls arose from amidst green foliage on the crest of a gentle hill, at a short distance up the river.

Half in joy at work accomplished and freedom gained, half in regret at leaving the school where they had been so happy for so many years, and teachers whom they had loved so well, the young friends gazed upon their late home.

The gentlemen of their party meanwhile walked up and down the deck, somewhat impatiently, until, as they passed near the two young ladies, Justin Rosenthal left his companions, and with a bow and a smile, as if asking permission, or apologizing for taking it for granted, seated himself beside Miss Conyers.

Britomarte would have given a year of her life to have repressed the blush that mantled over her cheek and brow as Justin took the seat beside her.

His first words were well chosen to set her at ease.

"The scenery is quite new to me, Miss Conyers. We came down by rail, and thence by stage coach to Bellemont. I look upon this fine scenery for the first time," he said, not, as before, fixing his eyes upon her, but letting them rove over the verdant hills beyond.

Britomarte only bowed in reply. She would have given another year of her life for the power of controlling the unusual tremor that seized her frame and made it dangerous to trust her voice for a steady answer in words.

Justin, still letting his eyes rove, and rest here and there upon particular points of interest in the scenery, spoke of the beautiful effects of the shifting light and shade as the clouds floated over the sun's disc and their shadows passed over the hills.

And Britomarte merely answered "yes," or "no," until, indignant at the influence that was growing upon her, she suddenly erected her haughty little head with an impatient shake, and said:

"That she could not appreciate the minutia of scenery; that only the ocean in its grandeur and might could awaken her admiration.

At this moment Dr. Rosenthal called to his son, and Justin, with a bow, left the side of Britomarte.

"Why, Britty, dearest! I always thought you loved scenery," said Erminie, when they were left alone together.

"So I do, as a general thing, but I don't care about it to-day," answered Miss Conyers.

"Well, Britty, dear, I never knew you to be capricious before."

"Nature has given me no immunity from the common weaknesses of human kind."

Erminie looked so hurt at the coarseness of her friend's words and manner, that Britomarte suddenly took her hand and tenderly caressed it.

Erminie, touched by this new proof of love, was encouraged to renew and press her invitation to Britomarte to go home with her to the paragonage.

Miss Conyers caressed her and thanked her, but reiterated her resolution to go to Witch Elms.

"Ah! don't; ah! don't—don't go to that horrid place, dear Britomarte! You don't know what it is! You have never been there, I believe?"

"No, never," answered Miss Conyers, who had spent all her holidays at the school.

"Then you can't know what a horrid place it is, or what horrid stories are told about it!"

"Have you been there, that you know so well, my dear?"

"No; but I've heard about it! Ah! I should not speak so of the home of your old relative, dear Britty; but it was for your sake! Forgive me, Britty."

"Nonsense! tell me what these horrid stories are."

"Oh! dear Britty, I am afraid."

"Why?"

"You would be hurt and angry."

"Nonsense again, my dear. I insist upon your telling me. I want to know something of the home to which I am going for the first time."

"Well, then, Britty, they say—that the place is haunted."

"Of course; they say every isolated old country house is haunted. What else?"

"That—the old lady who lives there, and who has lived so long, beyond the usual period of human existence, is really a witch, and has made a compact with the evil one, who prolongs her life."

"Ah! and what besides?"

"That on certain nights in the year, especially on All Hallows' Eve, the most unearthly sights and sounds may be seen and heard in and around that old house!"

"And all this, in the nineteenth century! I am surprised that you should pay any attention to such ridiculous stories, my dear."

"One must hear what is openly discussed in one's presence. I do not believe them any more than you do; but I think there must be something very wrong about a house of which such tales are told."

"So do I, my dear Erminie. And that makes it incumbent upon me to go there at once. My poor old relative is ninety-seven years of age—that is a sufficient reason for her isolation from general society. She is alone but for the presence of her two servants. It often happens that a mistress, aged, infirm and solitary, becomes the victim of her attendants. The consideration of all these circumstances decides me to go at once to Witch Elms."

"But—forgive me once again, dear Britomarte—are you expected or desired there?"

"I do not know. My old aunt has never written to me. The half-yearly payments for the schooling, for which I am indebted to her, always have been forwarded by her agent in Edinburgh. On each occasion I have written to her a letter of thanks; but I have never received an answer."

"Oh, Britomarte, how much more desolate you are than I ever imagined! Dear Britomarte, come home with me and be my sister," entreated Erminie, with the tears welling up into her soft, hazel eyes.

"I must go and report myself at Witch Elms, and thank my old aunt for all her liberality to me."

"And afterwards?"

"I shall be guided then, as now, by duty."

While they spoke the boat was getting up her steam, and now the bell changed out its warning that all loiterers were to hurry on board, and all intruders to hurry ashore.

In an instant all was confusion with the crowds of people hastening to and fro.

In the midst of the *mélée*, a boy came hurrying on board, and looking about as though in search of some one whom he was extremely anxious to find. As his glance lighted upon Britomarte he ran up to her and thrust a letter into her hand, exclaiming:

"Ah, miss, I'm so glad I got here in time, though I'm most out of breath. It come, the letter did, about half an hour after you left, and I ran all the way with it."

"Thank you, Tim; you are a faithful little friend," said Miss Conyers, opening her purse, and giving him a shilling from its slender store.

The boy, grinning with delight, as much at the kind words as at the coin, ducked his head with an awkward bow, and ran away, to get clear of the boat before she should leave the pier.

Britomarte opened her letter, and turned to the signature.

And her face was suddenly blanched to the hue of death, and she reeled as though about to fall.

"Britomarte, dear Britomarte, what is it? Any bad news?" anxiously exclaimed Erminie.

But Miss Conyers raised her hand with a silencing gesture, and arose to go down below.

She trembled so much as she moved, that Erminie started forward to attend her.

But with a repelling motion the pallid girl stopped her friend, and hurried alone on her way.

The boat steamed off from the pier, and the passengers began to look for seats.

Dr. Rosenthal, Colonel Eastworth and Justin came and placed themselves near Erminie.

"Where is your friend, my love?" inquired the doctor.

"Down in the cabin. A boy from the school came running to bring her a letter, which has agitated her very much indeed," replied Erminie.

"Had you not better go and see if you can do her any good, my love?" inquired the doctor.

"Oh, no! Dear papa, you don't know Britomarte. I started up to follow her down, but she stopped me with such a look, and such a gesture!"

"What is the nature of the news that she has re-

ceived?" inquired Justin, with an expression of deep interest.

"Ask the contents of the next sealed dispatch from Franco to England, and I can answer you as well. All I know is that the letter has overwhelmed Britomarte with agitation and affliction," replied Erminie, looking ready to burst into tears.

"I am sorry—truly, truly sorry—that anything should have occurred to one of your friends, so much to distress you," said Colonel Eastworth in a low and earnest tone.

The colour deepened on Erminie's cheeks, but she did not reply.

At the dinner hour Erminie was very glad of the excuse to go down into the cabin to Britomarte, to take off her bonnet and mantle, and go to the public table.

She opened the door timidly, and found Miss Conyers reclining on a kind of divan.

"Britomarte, dear Britomarte, how are you? Can I do anything for you?" murmured Erminie, stealing to her side.

"No! don't speak to me—leave me!" was all that Miss Conyers replied, and in a voice so hoarse as to be nearly inaudible.

Pale with pity and with awe, Erminie sank into a chair.

Then Miss Conyers suddenly turned upon the intruder a face so pale and ghastly in its grief and horror, that Erminie shrank back appalled.

"Yes—I can do no more. I cannot eat, or drink, or talk—much. I can only manage to live until I get there. Leave me!"

"Oh! heaven of heavens, what has happened to you, Britomarte!" exclaimed Erminie, pale with pity and terror.

She got up and opened the door to leave the cabin, when Britomarte called to her:

"Erminie, if you love me, see that your friends take no notice of my disturbance." She brought these words out as with the greatest reluctance and difficulty, and then added, as if in explanation or apology: "I could not stand questioning or sympathy from any one, just now."

"Be easy, dear love; you shall not be in the slightest degree annoyed. Shall you not come to dinner?" said the affectionate girl, lingering at the door.

"Yes."

"Then I will accompany you."

"Thank you, dear; I would rather you would."

Then they went up on deck together.

Erminie left her friend seated under the awning in the after part of the boat, and went forward to speak to her father and his friends, who were grouped together, engaged in what seemed a very interesting conversation.

After a few minutes talk with them, Erminie, attended by the whole party, returned to the spot where she had left Britomarte.

The gentlemen greeted Miss Conyers as though nothing unusual had happened.

And then they all went down to dinner, Eastworth escorting Erminie, and Justin attending Britomarte.

Miss Conyers took scarcely anything. But for the warning given by Erminie, Britomarte's paleness, silence and abstinence must have occasioned remark.

As it was, she was passed over unnoticed, except by the usual polite attentions of the table.

And in something less than an hour after this, the *Thetis* arrived at Edinburgh.

And the great bustle of disembarking ensued.

"My dear Miss Conyers," said Dr. Rosenthal, "I understand from my daughter that you have positively declined making us a visit; but now, at the last moment, let me prevail with you to make us all happy by consenting to go home with us at least for a day and night, if no longer, to rest before you go further."

"I thank you very much—more than I can express. But it is not in my power to accept your kind invitation. Urgent business compels me to go immediately to Glasgow. I know that a train leaves in an hour from this, and I must drive to the station instantly."

Britomarte spoke with the difficulty and hesitation she had exhibited in talking ever since the falling of that mysterious blow.

"What can I do for you, then? Speak and command me," said the old minister, kindly.

"Only have a cab called, and I shall be much obliged to you."

"Dear Britomarte," said Erminie, through her tears, "tell me at least when you will return."

"I do not know, my love," replied Miss Conyers.

"You will write to me?" said Erminie, in a pleading tone.

"Perhaps, darling; but I cannot even promise that."

At that moment Dr. Rosenthal returned to the boat

to announce that the carriages were waiting for Britomarte and for his own party.

Miss Conyers thanked the old minister, embraced Erminie, who was bathed in tears, and then turned to shake hands with Mr. Justin Rosenthal.

But raising his hat with a grave bow, Justin said: "I will see you to the station. Eastworth and my father are a sufficient body guard to Erminie."

And before the beautiful man-hater could object, he had taken her hand and was leading her from the boat.

He placed her in the carriage, entered and took a seat by her side, and gave the order to drive to the railway station.

All this was done in spite of Britomarte's tacit protest.

He did not, however, obtrude his conversation upon her. The drive was finished in silence.

On their arrival at the station he procured her ticket, checked her baggage, and then placed her in one of the most comfortable seats in the ladies' carriage.

Even then he did not leave her, but remained stationed by her until the shrill, unearthly whistle of the engine warned him to leave.

Then bending over her, he took her hand and whispered low:

"Miss Conyers, I never utter vain or hasty words. What I speak now, I speak earnestly from the depths of my heart. In me you have a friend through good report and evil report, through life and death, through time and eternity. I have never spoken these words to any human being before this; I never shall speak them to any other after this. Good-by; we shall meet again in a happier hour."

## CHAPTER XII

The wild wind sweeps across the dreary moors,  
And makes a weary noise and wailing moan,  
All night we hear the clasp of broken doors  
That on their rusty hinges grate and groan.  
And then old voices calling from behind  
The worn and worry-wainscot flapping in the wind.  
*Thomas Miller.*

Who are these,  
So withered and so wild in their attire,  
That look not like th' inhabitants of the earth,  
And yet are on it?—You should be—women—  
*Shakespeare.*

AFTER seeing Britomarte well on her way, Justin walked thoughtfully home to the parsonage.

That parsonage was an old-fashioned red brick cottage, standing back from the street in the midst of a well-shaded garden. Very comfortable it was, both within and without.

At least, so thought Eastworth, when at the close of the day he sat with Erminie in the vine-covered and rose-wreathed porch, apparently watching the twinkling of the stars through the foliage of the trees, and listening to the chirping of the insects in the dewy grass.

I said apparently, for in truth I believe he saw only the tender light in Erminie's soft hazel eyes, and heard only the gentle rise and fall of her bosom.

Ever the same old "o'er true tale." But if these two were a pair of lovers, they seemed to be holding a Quaker meeting, from which the spirit was absent, for neither the one nor the other was moved to speak, although they were alone, or perhaps because they were alone.

Whether they would have continued sitting side by side in silence for the whole evening will never be known, for when they had sat thus for only an hour, the hall-door opened, and Dr. Rosenthal and Justin sauntered out and joined them.

Dr. Rosenthal brought his pipe, which he always first lighted and then asked permission to smoke, which was always granted him, whereupon he walked up and down, puffing away with great satisfaction to himself.

Justin took a seat near his sister.

Now, Erminie was not so much absorbed in her new admirer as to forget her old love. She felt deeply anxious about Britomarte.

"What time do you think she will get into Glasgow, Justin dear?" she inquired of her brother.

"Not before eleven o'clock to-night, my child?" answered Justin.

"Oh, and only think of her having to travel alone, and arrive a stranger in that Babylon of a city. It is dreadful, Justin!"

And Erminie shuddered.

"Do not be alarmed for your friend, my dear. You know Miss Conyers better than I do—or, no, I didn't mean to say that, because it is not true; but you have known Miss Conyers longer than I have, and you ought to know that of all women, she is perhaps the best capable of taking care of herself," replied Justin.

"Ah, but, Justin, you don't consider that out of books and out of the schoolroom, she is as inex-

perienced as I am myself. Fancy, she was placed at Bellemont College when she was ten years old, and has been there eight years!"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Justin, in what seemed delight as well as surprise. "Is that possible? And yet she impresses me with the idea of one who has had much and bitter experience."

"So she does me, and so she does every one; but whatever those experiences have been, they have been pressed into the first ten years of her life."

"I am glad—I am very glad to hear that!" exclaimed Justin, with a deep sigh of relief; as if then, for the first time, some latent weight was thrown off his heart.

"Yes, and whatever that household mystery is that overshadows the life of Britomarte, and makes her a man-hater, it is something in which she could never have been an actor, but only a sufferer, since whatever it is, it belonged to her childhood, almost, we may say, to her infancy."

"I am very, very glad to hear you say that, Erminie! But, in these eight years, has she never left the school for any length of time?—never for a few weeks, at the Christmas and midsummer holidays?" questioned Justin, very anxiously.

He was like a very zealous advocate drawing out a witness for the defence.

"She has never been absent from Bellemont for a day in eight years. I can speak from personal knowledge for the last five years that I have been acquainted with her, and from the undoubted testimony of others who were with her during the three years she passed there before my entrance at the college."

"I am happy to hear it!" exclaimed Justin, so emphatically that Erminie broke forth impulsively with the exclamation:

"Why, surely, Justin, you never did Britomarte the injustice to suppose that she was to blame?"

"No!" burst forth Justin, with startling energy; "it is for her sake, thinking of the weight these facts will have with others, that I am glad."

"If it is not an indiscreet question, what is the nature of this mystery we are discussing?" inquired Colonel Eastworth, aside, of Dr. Rosenthal, who had paused near the group.

The old minister removed his pipe and shook his head, and gave no other answer.

Justin, who had overheard the inquiry, replied:

"This mystery, do you ask? We do not know. It is a whisper, a shadow, the slime of a serpent; but what may be the meaning of the whisper, the substance of the shadow, or the nature of the serpent, no one seems to know. If you please, Eastworth, we will drop the subject."

This ended the talk; and as very early hours were kept at the parsonage, the party soon separated and retired to rest.

Erminie had no sister or friend to sit and gossip with, after the manner of girls, for half the night, before going to sleep; so she lay silently in her white draped bed, dreaming over the events of the last two days.

Yes; but two days ago she was a light-hearted school girl, fancy free; with no deeper love to trouble her life than that she bore her father and brother and her friend Britomarte.

Now she has stirred within her breast  
The keen and fatal interest  
But with life to be suppressed

Alas for the poor maiden! He was older than herself by fifteen or twenty years; but with her in whose love reverence was so large an element, his superiority in age was an advantage.

What did he think of her? Did he approve of her? Was it possible that he could love her?

Those were the questions that troubled her most: for she could not answer them satisfactorily to herself. His eyes expressed admiration, his voice betrayed tenderness; but his words told nothing.

Suddenly, in the midst of her speculations, she remembered Britomarte, and reproached herself for allowing any other person to occupy her thoughts to the exclusion of her.

And she composed herself to pray for Britomarte's safety; and so praying—fell asleep.

Days passed; but no news came of Miss Conyers. Eastworth remained at the parsonage, wooing the minister's daughter—never with compromising words, but with glances more eloquent and tones more expressive than words could ever be; for if his words were only "The day is beautiful," his tone said, "I love you!" his glance said, "For you are more beautiful than the summer's day."

And Erminie! how entirely she believed in him, how devotedly she loved him, how disinterestedly she worshipped him.

"If I could in any way add to his fame, or honour, or happiness, how blessed I should be! And oh, if he should go away without ever telling me what I could do to please him, how wretched I should become! Ah, he may meet more beautiful, more ac-

complished, and more distinguished women in the great world than ever I can hope to be; but he will never meet one who could love him more than I do!"

Such reveries as these, scarcely taking the form of words even in her thoughts, engaged the young girl constantly.

In the midst of this trouble came letters from the Goldsborghs.

One from Papa Goldsborgh to Papa Rosenthal, inviting him, his family, and his guest to come down to the Rainbows on a visit for the season; and another from Alberta to Erminie, urging her to use her influence with her father to induce him to accept the invitation.

No interference on the part of Erminie was needed. Dr. Rosenthal, with the concurrence of his son and his guest, wrote to Mr. Goldsborgh to say that he and his party would be at the Rainbows.

As soon as the letter was written and posted, and fairly on its way, Erminie went to look for her brother in the library, where in study he passed his mornings.

"Justin, do I interrupt you?" she inquired, in a deprecating tone, as she opened the door and found him at his books.

"No, my dear, you never do," replied Justin, closing the volume in his hand, and drawing forward a chair for his sister.

"Justin, I want you to do something for me this afternoon, please," she said, as she seated herself.

"What is it, dear?"

"Oh, Justin, it is now four weeks since Britty went away, and we have heard nothing from her, and we do not know where to address her."

"Well, my dear?"

"And to-morrow evening we start for the Rainbows, to be absent for the whole remainder of the season."

"Yes."

"But, Justin, I cannot, indeed I cannot bear to go away without first trying to find out something about my dear Britomarte!"

"Well."

"And so I wish you, if you please, to take me to Witch Elms to ask about it."

"Well, dear, I will think about it."

"Oh, Justin, there is no time to think! there is only time to act; we go away so soon. Ah, Justin, how can you be so cool about it, you who profess to think so much of Britomarte?"

"I do think so much of her, so highly of her, that I have perfect confidence in her ability to take care of herself, and so I am not uneasy."

"But I am! I am—very uneasy; and I must try to find out about her!"

"But Miss Conyers decidedly discouraged all interference in her affairs."

"I know she did; but I cannot bear this anxiety any longer, and I will not leave without trying first to get some news of Britty!" exclaimed Erminie, almost ready to cry with excitement.

"Quiet yourself, my sister, for if you so much desire it, I will take you to Witch Elms," said Justin, kindly.

"Oh, thank you—thank you, dear brother. You are always so good to your poor little sister! Now I will go away, and get ready," said Erminie, and she kissed him and hurried away.

Justin explained to his father, that as he and Erminie were going some distance by rail they would be absent from dinner that evening, and would not probably return till late at night.

And Erminie, hastily putting on her bonnet and mantle, joined her brother in the hall, and was handed by him into the carriage which he had ordered.

"Drive to the railway-station," was the order given by Justin, as soon as he had taken his seat beside Erminie.

The carriage quickly deposited them at the station, whence a train which they just succeeded in timing, carried them to the station which was their destination, and which we shall call Lady's Bridge, at some distance from Melrose.

Justin with his sister emerged from the station, and hailing a hackney carriage, entered it, and gave his orders to the driver.

"There is a very dark cloud rising in the West, Justin dear. I hope there is not going to be a storm; what do you think?"

"I think there will be a storm, Erminie; but it need not disturb you in the least. I never break an appointment on account of the weather."

"We are not exposed; but the horses—the driver?"

"Oh, ay! I fancy they will survive it."

"Something of a stoic in his own person, Justin had but little sympathy with the effeminacy of others."

The carriage rolled on its way for some considerable distance before it reached Lady's Bridge.

There they stopped to pay the toll.



"After we get to the other side, will you know what road to take?" inquired Justin of his sister.

"Indeed, no, but we can ask the keeper here," said Erminie.

"Can you direct us the way to Witch Elms?" inquired Justin of the old man who was giving him his change.

"What?" screamed the old fellow, making a scoop of his hand, and placing it behind his ear to catch the sound.

"The way to Witch Elms?" repeated Justin.

"Which?"

"Witch Elms!" bawled Justin.

"Oh, Lor!" exclaimed the toll-taker.

"What's the matter?"

"Sure you'll never go there?"

"Why not?"

"Such a place!—no one ever does."

"Can you tell me the way?"

"Oh, ay, if you will go. You follow the road leading straight out from the bridge, up hill and down, through the woods for two or three miles, and then turn to your left. It lays thereaway somewhere; but you'd better ask again when you get into that neighbourhood."

"Thank you. This is satisfactory," laughed Justin.

"But, I say, there seems to be a storm a-coming up, friend; so if you're a travelling, you'd better put up for the night somewhere, and not try to get on to Witch Elms to-night," screamed the old man, as loudly as if he thought that his interlocutor was as deaf as himself.

"Thank you again. I am not afraid of the weather," said Justin, closing the blind of the carriage-window, as he signalled the driver to go on.

The sky was growing dark with clouds and the air audible with thunder.

"Justin, I will not insist on going on. If you please, we will turn back," said Erminie.

"My sister, it is better to brave the thunder-storm, which will be but a transient inconvenience, than to endure, for an indefinite time, the keen anxiety you say you must feel, unless you get tidings of Miss Conyers."

"That is true," sighed Erminie, subsiding into her cushions.

"Drive fast!" called out Justin to the coachman.

And the horses were put upon their mettle. And they went on with great speed for a mile or two, when Justin thought it was time to pull up and look at the weather and inquire the way.

Darker grew the sky, deeper growled the thunder, and faster fell the rain-drops.

"If we could only reach the old place before the storm actually bursts upon us, we might remain there until it subsides, and ride home by moonlight. The moon rises, I think, about half-past nine," said Justin.

"Which way now, sir?" inquired the coachman, touching his hat to Justin, as he looked out of the window.

"I am looking for some one of whom to inquire," replied Justin, glancing up and down the gloomy road.

An old man soon loomed from the obscurity, driving a belated cow before him.

"Old man," said Justin, "can you tell us how far it is to Witch Elms?"

"Oh heavens!" exclaimed the old fellow, in a tone of consternation.

"What's the matter?" demanded Justin.

"You're never going there, master?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, heaven bless your soul, master, I advise you not to go there!"

"Why?"

"Umph—umph, master. Don't ask me, but take my advice."

"Can you direct me the way to get there?" demanded Justin, throwing him a piece of silver.

"If you must go, you must go! Well, it's right straight ahead about half a mile, or thereabouts; you come to an old broken down barn, where you will see an old grass-grown road, that goes right across an old field, beyond which the ground slopes downwards into the woods again, in which is the house you are after. The Lord help you, master, and it's getting dark and stormy!"

"Thank you. Drive on, coachman!"

"Stop, master!"

"What now?"

"I'm going to warn you as how, when you get to the barn, as you can't go much further across the fields in the carriage, because of the road through the woods being choked up like with falling trees here and there; so if you must go to the house—Lord keep you!—you'll have to leave the carriage and horses under the shelter of the barn and walk it."

"Thank you once more. Drive on, coachman," said Mr. Rosenthal.

And the carriage started, leaving the man standing by the roadside, bowing and waving his hat.

"All agree in their estimation of our enterprise, Erminie; and this really begins to look like an adventure!" laughed Justin, as he settled himself back in his seat.

The carriage rolled on its way for about half or three-quarters of a mile further, when the coachman suddenly pulled up the horses and exclaimed:

"Here we are at the old barn, sir."

Justin looked out. The sky was very dark; but a sudden glare of lightning showed a dilapidated barn, a broken fence, and a bare field, bounded at the farther end by the woods.

"We must stop here. Tuck up your dress, Erminie, and give me your hand," said Mr. Rosenthal, opening the carriage door and standing ready to help his sister out.

"Oh, Justin, it really does seem to me as if you wished to punish me for my persistence in taking me out in this storm," said Erminie, half laughing and half crying, as she gave him her hand and sprang from the carriage.

"Not at all. I only want to convince you, that, on land, the weather is of little consequence. There is not one person in a million ever struck by lightning or drowned by rain," answered Justin, as he hoisted a large umbrella.

"And whatever will Miss Pole think of us, coming to call upon her at such an hour and in such a storm?" exclaimed Erminie.

"And that is another thing which is of little consequence, what Miss Pole thinks of us," answered Justin, as he stopped a moment to remove some fallen posts from a gap in the broken fence to take his sister through.

"Ah, dear me, this is very odd," sighed Erminie, as assisted by her brother, she made her way through.

"My good little sister, to hear you talk, one would naturally suppose that I had originated this adventure and compelled you to embark upon it; whereas the truth is, you came into the library where I was quietly reading, and coaxed and blustered me into bringing you out here. However, I forgive you! And I also assure you, that as you are not easily soluble in water, the rain won't melt you!"

Erminie laughed; and Justin turned towards the coachman, saying:

"Tompkins, you had better drive under the shelter of the broken barn and remain there until we return. We shall not be gone more than an hour at the longest."

The coachman touched his hat and gladly obeyed.

And Justin and Erminie, arm in arm, under the shelter of a large umbrella, trudged across the old fields.

The rain fell fast, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed.

And Erminie shrank and cowered to her brother's side and was upheld and encouraged by his strength and cheerfulness.

Only at intervals by flashes of lightning could they see the way before them.

They stumbled on under the black sky and over the rough ground as well as they could, until they crossed the field and reached the other broken fence, which separated it from the woods.

Justin helped Erminie through the gap, as a glare of lightning showed them the continuation of the road.

This road was grass-grown and obstructed, and narrowed until it was nothing more than a foot-path through the thicket.

The rain was now pouring in torrents, but the meeting boughs over their heads kept it off them.

On and on they struggled through the woods, until at length they came to a gloomy opening from the midst of which loomed up among shadows, like a denser shadow, a huge, dark building, surrounded by broken fences and fallen sheds. No light was visible from any part of the premises.

Justin waited until a flash of lightning showed the gaping gateway, where the fallen gate lay upon the ground.

"Oh! what a place! Oh! what a home for Britomarte!" gasped Erminie, with a shiver, as they walked over the prostrate gate into the yard.

Justin replied, but the rolling of the thunder and the roaring of the wind drowned the sound of his voice.

Holding Erminie tightly under his arm, he groped his way towards the front of the house, when again the terrible fire of heaven flashed forth and showed him the great old-fashioned double oaken door, with a projecting roof above it.

Drawing Erminie close along with him, he went up the mouldy stone steps leading to this roofed door, and felt about until he got his hand upon the iron knocker, with which he sounded an alarm that might have waked the dead.

It only waked the dogs shut up within the house, who opened a fierce fire of barks.

"Oh, dear, dear me, Justin! I wish we had not come!" gasped Erminie, clinging closer to her brother's arm.

"I like it, my dear. It looks quite like an adventure," laughed Justin.

"Yes; like an adventure that might end in a— Oh! bless the dogs! I can't hear myself speak for them!" exclaimed Erminie, impatiently breaking off amid the yelps of the canine sentinels.

"Hush! there is some one coming at last," whispered Justin, as steps were heard approaching and a voice growling:

"Down, Fangs! Be quiet, Throttler! What do you mean? Down, all of you!"

And these commands being enforced with hearty kicks and cuffs, order was soon restored in the house.

Then came a sound of grating keys and shooting bolts and falling bars and rattling chains, that all seemed to be the manifold fastenings of the old oaken door.

"Gracious me, is the old place a dungeon?" whispered Erminie, quivering with excitement.

Before Justin could answer, the door opened, and a cautious voice spoke from the darkness.

"Is that you, Doll?"

"No, it is not Doll, whoever Doll may be," answered Justin.

There was silence for a moment, during which the door was held carefully. Then the voice from behind it spoke again.

"Who are you?"

"A friend of Miss Conyers," answered Justin.

"What do you want?" was the next question.

"First of all to get in out of the storm," answered Justin, impatiently, and at the same time suddenly pushing the door open, and drawing his sister into the hall after him.

The door as suddenly clanged to, and they found themselves in utter darkness and apparent solitude.

"Well, upon my word, if variety is the spice of life, this is one of the most pungent of the spices. I say!—you!—waiter! footman! hall-porter! whatever you are!—where are you?" exclaimed Justin, holding Erminie close to his side, and groping along the wall.

There was no answer.

"Where are you, I say?" thundered Justin, waking the echoes of the old house.

His voice died away amid profound silence.

"Oh, Justin!" moaned Erminie.

"Don't be alarmed, my dear; you are perfectly safe," whispered her brother.

"Let us try to get out," she pleaded.

"I will try at least to open the door," said Justin, groping his way to the front of the hall, "and the lightning will show us where to find another door, perhaps," he continued, as he felt about the oaken boards until he got hold of the lock.

It was a spring-lock, and resisted his efforts to unfasten it.

"Well, really, this is very pleasant! I say, you! Cerberus! Dog-queller! Man-trapper! Where are you? Answer for yourself!" exclaimed Justin.

But the resounding echo of the old building was the only response he got.

Erminie was clinging and trembling and cowering at his side.

"What in the world are you afraid of, my dear? This is a sulky, inhospitable house, and that is the worst that can be said of it, I suppose," laughed Justin, to re-assure his sister.

He was next to the dark wall, feeling his way along its length, in the hope of finding another door at which to knock.

He was feeling his way with his left hand, while Erminie hung upon his right arm.

His hand found nothing but a rugged wall; his feet came plump up against an obstruction.

Stooping down, he felt about, and found that he was at the foot of a flight of stairs.

"Come, Erminie, we will ascend and pursue this adventure," he said, laughing.

Partly because they had to go slowly and cautiously, and partly because their footsteps were naturally light, they went upstairs noiselessly, Justin holding on to the balustrades with one hand, and guiding Erminie with the other, until they reached the upper hall.

Still all was dark as the grave and silent as death.

"Justin," whispered Erminie, "I feel as if I was in a disagreeable dream, or had the nightmare."

"Erminie," he answered, laughing, "I feel as if I had lost my footing in this age and country, and slipped down into the middle of the tenth century in Spain!"

"Hush!" whispered Erminie.

"What is it?"

"I heard some one talking! Listen!"

There was certainly a murmur proceeding from some dark room in their vicinity, and then an angry voice spoke aloud:

"Why the foul fiend, then, didn't you take them in to see the old woman?"

The muttering voice made some reply, to which the loud voice responded:

"Boah! what danger? that's all over now. The verdict of the coroner's inquest settled that. Suicide. Nothing more likely. After that, there was nothing more to be said."

A blaze of lightning that flashed through every chink and crevice of the shut-up old house, and a crash of thunder that overwhelmed all other sounds, stopped the talk of the unmen companions.

Then the muttering voice was heard again, saying something offensive to the interlocutor, though inaudible to the listeners, for the loud voice replied:

"Drinking! No, I have not been drinking—at least not more than is good for me. The moment any one takes a deep breath and shows a little fearlessness, you think they've been—drinking. Go and look after the people you have left in the hall so long, and take them up to see the old woman. That is, if she wants to see them. You must humour her; but as for the girl—"

Again the muttering voice intervened, but the loud voice broke in:

"I tell you she must be got out of the way! Now go and look after these visitors below."

A sound of shuffling feet was heard. And Justin whispered to Erminie:

"Little sister, there's something wrong here, but we must not seem to have been listening. And so saying, he hurried her down the stairs, as fast as the darkness would permit him to do with safety. Arrived at the foot, he waited some few minutes and then he sang out as loud as he could:

"Hallo! waiter! porter! footman! major-domo! man-of-all-work! whatever or whoever you are! where are you? Come, let us in; or let us out!"

"I am here, set fire to you! Couldn't you be quiet for five minutes, while I was gone to tell the old lady?" answered a growling voice from the hall above. And at the same time a person, bearing a dim light, began to descend the stairs.

He was a man of about thirty years of age, of gigantic height, but with a small head, and closely-cut black hair, and a beardless, or else closely-shaven, dark-complexioned face; a man you would not like to meet on a lonely road on a dark night. He was dressed from head to foot in a closely-fitting suit of dust-coloured coarse cloth.

"Couldn't you be easy for five minutes, while I was gone?" he growled, as he reached the foot of the stairs.

"Your minutes are very long ones, friend!" laughed Justin.

"You want to see the old lady, you say?"

"I wish to see Miss Pole."

"Come along, then," said the man, stopping to snuff the candle with his fingers, and then leading the way upstairs.

Justin, still holding his sister closely under his arm, re-ascended the stairs.

By the light of the candle carried by the man before him, he saw that this part of the old house seemed entirely unfurnished. The floors were bare and rough, and broken here and there, and the walls were disfigured by torn paper and fallen plastering.

Arrived at the landing of the staircase, Justin noticed that many doors led into this hall; but they were all closely shut.

Up still another flight of stairs they went, and then all was changed.

This hall of the third storey was neatly papered and comfortably carpeted, and well-lighted by a small, clear lamp, hanging from the ceiling. A large window at the end of this hall was also curtained. Four doors opened from it; two on the right and two on the left; they were painted white, and were very clean.

Indeed, everything on this floor seemed very neat and clean, well kept and comfortable—forming a marked contrast to the neglect, dirt, desolation and discomfort below.

The smooth-chinned giant in the dust-coloured clothes, opened the nearest door to the right, and said:

"Go in there."

With Erminie under one arm, and his hat in his hand, Justin entered the room.

It was a neatly-furnished sitting-room, lighted, like the hall, by a small, clear lamp, hanging from the ceiling.

Under this lamp stood a large, round, centre-table, covered with a flowered green cloth, and laden with books, book-marks, hand-screens, smelling-bottles, a small open work-box, and, in short, all the paraphernalia of a lady's table.

Beside it, in a large, rufous-chair, with her feet upon a foot-cushion reclined a very old lady, bent with age, and trembling with palsy. She was wrapped in a light-coloured French chintz dressing-gown, and

her shaking head was covered with a fine lace cap, whose deep borders softly shaded her silver hair and withered face.

Seeing the visitors enter, she laid aside the knitting-work she had held in her hands, and took up an ivory-headed cane that stood by her side, and so attempted to rise to receive them; but apparently her strength was not equal to the task, for after shaking violently, she dropped the cane and sank back in her chair.

Justin immediately stepped forward, picked up the fallen cane, and with a reverential bow to the aged woman, set it in its place.

"You've come to see me?" inquired the old lady, in a shrill and quivering voice.

"Yes, madam; I hope to see you in your usual health," said the young man, bending his head.

Miss Pole stretched out her trembling hand, and took up a small hand-bell from the table, and rang it feebly.

A door, leading from the adjoining room, opened, and an aged woman, almost as much bent, infirm and withered as her mistress, entered.

"Nan, place chairs for this gentleman and this—Who is the lady?" said Miss Pole, suddenly turning to Justin.

"Miss Rosenthal, my sister," answered the young man.

"Place chairs for Mr.—Mr. Rodenstall and his sister."

The weird serving-woman did as she was bid, and then left the room.

"Now, then, my good sir, to business. I suppose you come from Trent, my agent?" said Miss Pole, when all were seated.

"No, madam, I—"

"Then what did you come for? I receive no visitors except upon business," interrupted the old lady, impatiently.

"Pardon us, madam. We are friends of your niece, and not having heard from her for some time, and being on the point of leaving for the season, we came here to inquire about her."

"About—whom?" demanded Miss Pole, in a shrill impatient voice, as she began to tremble with excitement.

"Your niece—Miss Conyers," said Justin.

Shaking violently, the old lady moved her hand to the bell and rung it again.

The weird handmaid appeared.

"Nan, Nan, show these people downstairs, and tell 'em to see 'em out, and to mind how he sends unwelcome visitors to me again!" exclaimed the old lady, shaking more and more violently with growing excitement.

"I hope I have given you no cause for offence, madam," said Justin, deprecatingly.

"Offence! off—offence!" stammered the old lady, with her head nodding fast between palsy and anger.

"How dare you mention the name of Britomarte Conyers in my presence?—a toad! a snake!" And at every epithet she shook with anger. "Show 'em out! show 'em out! show 'em out, Nan!"

"I am very sorry, madam, to hear you speak in this intemperate manner of your niece. I have the highest respect for Miss Conyers," said Justin, gravely.

"You have? A monster! a serpent! Show 'em out! Show 'em out! Why don't you show 'em out, Nan?" cried the old lady, nodding her head, and stamping her feet, and rattling her cane with her shaking hands.

"You hurt yourself much more than you hurt Miss Conyers, by this injurious language; for her, indeed, it cannot affect," said Justin, sternly.

"Go! go! go!" spluttered the old creature, letting fall her cane, and seizing up a book, which, with all her trembling strength, she launched at the offender. But, of course, the missile fell wide of its mark.

Erminie, shocked, amazed and terrified, clung to the arm of her brother.

"I wish you a better spirit, Miss Pole," said Justin; and bowing as courteously as if he were leaving the presence of a queen who had condescended upon him a grace, he passed out of the room, while the weird waiting-woman held open the door.

"Oh! what a house; oh! what people. Poor Britomarte!" gasped Erminie, hiding her face on her brother's bosom, and bursting into tears.

"For heaven's sake, my child, try to be calm. We shall soon be out of this and on our way home," whispered Justin, as they descended the stairs. The giant with the small head and bate chin awaited them in the hall below.

"Had a pleasant visit, master, eh?" he asked, with an ugly grin.

"Open the door, was the only answer Justin deigned to make."

"With pleasure, master," said the man in a sarcastic tone, as he unlatched the hall door and set it open.

Justin led his sobbing sister out, and the door clanged to behind them.

Erminie's spirits had been too severely tried, and she could not at once recover her equanimity.

The storm had subsided, and the remnants of the storm-clouds had separated overhead, and were rolling down and massing themselves in heavy ranges of mountains around the horizon.

The moon was climbing up through a ravine in the eastern range.

"Come, cheer up, my darling! A grim old house, a glum old hostess, and a grudging welcome. That is all that can be said about our adventure. It is something to laugh at now that it is over," said Justin, as he led the unnerved girl through the broken gateway, and into the narrow foot-path through the woods.

"Oh, Justin, I shall not get over it in a month! I never will insist on going anywhere again," said Erminie.

"Tuck up your dress, my dear. It is very wet here from the recent rain," said Justin, as they carefully picked their way through the wood-path that brought them at last to the broken fence dividing the woods from the old field.

Justin helped his sister over this obstruction, and they crossed the field to the old barn, where the carriage awaited them.

They found the carriage in a well-sheltered place under the old roof.

The horses were standing as patient as pack horses are wont to do, and the coachman, having taken shelter inside the carriage, was fast asleep.

Justin woke him up, and finally succeeded in getting him up into his seat and putting the reins into his hands.

Then Mr. Rosenthal put his sister into the carriage, took his seat by her side, and gave the order to drive back to the station.

The horses moved with a will; and so, after two hours of rapid travelling, they reached the station; whence they were once more whirled swiftly home, and arrived safely at the parsonage.

(To be continued.)

FRANCH official statistics state that during the six months terminating in May last, 6,765 communes in France were provided with adult schools. These afforded education to 178,256 men and 18,587 women and girls. The average payment was 16 francs monthly. In 2,775 schools the teaching was gratuitous.

ARRIVAL OF ENGLISH BIRDS IN NEW ZEALAND.

The last mail from New Zealand announces the arrival there, in the Indian Empire, which left Gravesend on April 17, of Mr. James Kidd, with a number of English birds, including forty-three partridges (seventy shipped), seventeen pheasants (twenty shipped), larks, goldfinches, greenfinches, redpolls, swans, Dorking fowls. Also ten cases of valuable plants. They were for Wm. Robinson, Esq., of Cheviot Hills, Canterbury, New Zealand, and of Albert-gate, London (the owner of Gratitude, Wedding Peal, and other racehorses).

A HUMMING BIRD.—In the garden of O. Longstaff, Esq., Barnardcastle, a humming bird was killed a few days ago. The gardener, for a fortnight previously, had observed the bird flitting from tree to tree, but his impression then was that it was a large insect of some description. Seeing it in the green-house, he attempted to capture it in his straw hat, and in doing so he crushed it so severely that it died. He then discovered that it was not an insect, and subsequent inquiry proved that it was a humming-bird. It is a matter for conjecture how this bird, a native of South America, came to be at large in this neighbourhood, as there is no news of a humming-bird having escaped from any private aviary in the vicinity of Barnardcastle.

REMARKABLE RECOVERY OF SPEECH.—A poor woman, sixty years of age, named Rebecca Wilson, residing at 48, Innocent-street, Boston, had been confined to her bed for more than twenty years, and during the whole of that time had been dependent upon the parish for her maintenance. In 1848 the acuteness of her affliction was increased by the loss of her speech. Deprived of the use of her tongue, her friends—had the chief of whom was Mr. Farndon, Groom—had the alphabet and a few figures printed on a large card-board, and by the use of these she held communication with her visitors. On Sunday, the 16th inst., as she states, she was thinking of her mother, when she was perfectly startled to hear herself speak the word—the first word she had been able to utter for seventeen years. In the exuberance of her joy she would have Mr. Groom sent for, and on his reaching her bedside the first thing she did was to express her deep thankfulness to the board of guardians for their great kindness to her during her severe and protracted affliction.





["A THOUSAND TIMES—NO, NO, NO!"]

# THE STRANGERS' SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Seventh Marriage," "The Warning Voice," "Man and his Idol," &c.

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

Am I too happy now?—I feel  
Sometimes as if I were;  
The future that before me lies  
Has many an unknown care.

WHILE events were shaping themselves after this fashion, and gathering clouds hung ready to burst, over the heads of those whose fortunes constitute the main thread of our narrative, certain matters worthy your attention were happening at Englestone Park.

The visitors we have met there were joined by other visitors, until the old mansion was as gay and animated, and comprised almost as great a variety of inmates, as a continental boarding-house.

But against all comers the "good-hearted people"—Major Torrens, his good-hearted daughter, and his broad-shouldered son—held their own. The major was too good-hearted not to take a lively interest in all his old school-fellow's affairs; Elsie was too good-hearted to give up dear Blanche to any rival; and Charlie actually neglected his dogs, and had half a mind to forego riding to hounds, out of consideration for the ladies who didn't hunt, and, more especially, Blanche Selwyn.

Of course the gushing Elsie had soon learnt of Blanche the history of her engagement with Gabriel Edgecombe, and its distressing termination; but Blanche did not feel it necessary to open her heart as to the real sorrow of her life, the hopeless passion for the lost Neville Ouslow.

But what she did impart was sufficient to excite the ready sympathies of Elsie.

"Dreadful! Shocking!" she kept exclaiming, with uplifted hands; "and only to think of a lover pining away in a dungeon!"

"I dare not think of it," said Blanche.

"So romantic, isn't it, dear?"

"It is very terrible."

"And with death before him. Unfortunately, a common-place death."

Blanche looked up inquiringly.

"If he had only been guilty of high treason," pursued the romantic Elsie, "and they would have

beheaded him, like—like any historical personage, with the executioner walking before him in a black mask, carrying the axe, with the edge turned from him—Oh, dear, you're turning pale. I don't distress you, do I? It's only my way. I am so romantic."

Blanche assured the talkative girl, who looked forty and dressed like sixteen, that she was not particularly distressed by the romantic suggestion; but as the subject was a painful one, she added, she naturally shrank from it.

In this view the young lady concurred, and tried to change the subject, but perpetually returned to it; and at last, unable to overcome her feelings farther, she let out the real ground of her interest in the story.

"Oh, dear," she exclaimed, putting her arm round her companion's neck, "I may say what I feel, mayn't I? Oh yes, I know I may; you won't mind, because you're so good-hearted. What a pity, what a thousand pities, it wasn't Charlie!"

"You mean—"

"That if he had only come from India a year or two sooner! His lordship and the major, my father—such old, old friends! And you had met Charlie, and been engaged—such a dear, good-hearted fellow as he is!—and all had gone on nice and smooth and comfortable, as it *must* have done. Oh, how delightful! How delicious!"

The rapture in her own face was hardly reflected in that of her new friend, and she thereupon became suddenly serious.

"You do like him, dear, don't you?" she inquired.

"Your brother? Oh, yes."

"And do you think him handsome, now? Many do: some do not. Do you?"

"He is manly, and—kind," Blanche answered.

"Oh, kindness itself. So good-hearted, you know. You like him, I see?"

"Yes, certainly."

The lady addressed sprang up and clapped her hands.

"I am so glad," she cried, with her customary exuberance, "I can't tell you how glad I am—I can't indeed. Oh, you darling, darling dear!"

And before Blanche was prepared for any such demonstration, she found herself hugged to Elsie's bosom, while kisses from her lips were raining on her cheeks and mouth.

The impression sought to be produced by this enthusiastic sister was strengthened by the conduct of Charlie himself. His attentions to Blanche were unremitting, and were often of the most delicate and con-

siderate nature. In her presence and for her sake, he succeeded in effecting a singular change in himself. His great height and breadth of shoulder, with a trooper-like bearing acquired in the course of an active life spent among rough companions, horses and dogs, unfitted him for shining in the drawing-room. He looked out of place there, almost as much as his horse would have done. But such is the refining influence of the softer feelings and emotions, that in a very little while he perfectly adapted himself to the new state of things.

Depend on it Hercules did not look so ridiculous lying at the feet of Omphale as one might suppose. A Crimean hero holding a skein of silk for a Belgravian belle to wind, is not necessarily a subject for caricature.

But however that may be, delicate attentions to women can never be without their effect. They are a kind of practical flattery, always acceptable, and always appreciated. In time the object of it forgets that the man who renders himself at once agreeable and useful—who plans surprises and anticipates wishes—is unattractive or even objectionable. He becomes indispensable. His absence creates a void; and his return is welcomed because it is certain to be attended with pleasurable results.

So it was in this instance.

Blanche cared little or nothing for the "good-hearted" Charlie. His attentions at first oppressed her; and if she thought of him more than she would have done through Elsie's perpetual reference to the subject, it was only to compare him unfavourably with the loved and lost.

What a contrast he presented to the handsome chivalric, high-souled Neville Ouslow!

She was constantly thinking this; but somehow, by slow and imperceptible degrees, the contrast did not appear so striking. Use is a great deal in these matters, and then Charlie improved under the influence of his new position, dressed better, was more scrupulously attentive to his personal appearance, neglected his dogs; but polished up his French, music, and etiquette.

In this, and other ways, he strove to render himself agreeable, and succeeded.

Before a week was over, Blanche was surprised, almost frightened, to find how necessary he had become to her.

At the end of that week an alarming incident occurred at Englestone Park.

Blanche was startled out of her sleep in the middle of the night, by a few hasty and alarming words, spoken by her maid:

"My lord was very ill. His valet had found him lying in bed insensible and apparently dead."

That was the statement.

Blanche, terrified beyond measure, hastened to her father's room and found the sad intelligence confirmed. His lordship was in a kind of fit; his features were rigid, his eyes rolled to and fro, without the power of sight. His daughter spoke to him, in impassioned and imploring terms; but he did not hear her, and his lips only moved furtively.

In this state the peer remained all night and the greater portion of the next day.

It was not until evening that he showed signs of recovery. During all those weary hours Blanche had not quitted the bedside, but had sat there, with Major Torrens as her companion, until fairly overcome with fatigue, her head sank back in her chair.

The low, faint voice of her father awoke her.

The major was gone.

They were alone.

Overjoyed, the gentle sylph-like girl seized her parent's hand and kissed and shed tears of joy over it. The sense of his daughter's affection caused a smile to light up his lordship's face; but it was wan and strange, utterly changed from what it had been even the day before.

"My poor Blanche," he murmured, "this is an unexpected calamity. Poor girl! Poor girl!"

"Oh, do not think of me, father dear," Blanche replied; "in a few days you will be yourself again, and then all will be well."

He shook his head mournfully and burst into tears.

"The tears of an old man, how touching, how impressive they are! So seldom shed, and never but when the heart is full of breaking."

"I do not dare to hope it," he said.

"Oh, do not say so, father. Do not—do not break my heart," pleaded Blanche.

"I am an old man," he answered, "and this is a warning I dare not neglect. Heaven knows how soon my hour may come, and then—what will become of my darling?"

Blanche could not answer; she was too greatly moved.

"I thought to have seen you the happy wife of a deserving man," his lordship went on; "and then, leaving you to your natural protector, I could have gone my way in peace. But now it is a sore grief to me—a sore grief."

"Do not think of it," Blanche sobbed; "do not distress yourself, father dear."

"But to leave you alone in the world! It is too sad, too distressing."

"Nay, you will not leave me. You will live," she answered.

He did not reply, and there was an interval of profound and painful silence.

It was Lord Englestone who interrupted it.

"Blanche," he cried, drawing her hands toward him, "may I dare to hope one thing? May I comfort my heart with the thought that the son of my old friend is not wholly indifferent to you? You father and tremble, and your cheek changes. May I hope it, darling, may I hope it?"

She could not find it in her heart to answer with a stern decision "No." It was so evidently a project conceived for her good. Still it startled and shocked her.

"I—I have never thought of Mr. Torrens, except as a friend," she replied.

"But you will. He is a good-hearted, handsome lad; he will make you a fitting husband—better than half the men of higher rank who are sure to aspire to your hand; and with such an arrangement settled, I could close my eyes in peace, whenever it may please heaven to take me hence. Say that you will respect my wishes in this; that you will try, try to bring yourself to act for the best. Promise me this, Blanche, my darling, darling child."

No words passed her lips; but there was a pressure of the little hand which her father held in his grasp, and he was satisfied.

And Blanche Selwyn quitted her father's room overcome with a feeling she had never experienced before. It was one of mingled awe and terror. She had an instinctive feeling that she had gone too far; that out of love to her father and consideration for his feelings, she had pledged herself to what was consequent neither with her duty nor her happiness. She thought of the fealty she owed to the memory of him who was in his grave. She thought of the heartless woman she must appear in the eyes of poor unhappy Gabriel, whom she had been compelled to desert in his sorest need. Then she asked herself, "Do I love this stranger?" And the answer swept over her heart as the cold, wailing autumn winds sweep over the desolate earth, freezing and numbing it.

Her answer was "No."

A thousand times—No, no, no!

## CHAPTER LXXV.

### JEALOUS DESPAIR.

Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die.

Tennyson.

How did it chance that Dorian presented himself at the Manor House as described?

This calls for explanation, as we left the Italian at Nestleborough, in no little peril from the sudden onslaught of the infuriated "Duke."

It was a critical moment.

No one could look into the face which met Dorian's without experiencing a sensation of terror. True it was only the face of an old man, a feeble man; but in it was concentrated the force of deadly passions, which, as in the mahab, often exhibit superhuman strength, triumphing over mere physical weakness.

It would be wrong to say that Dorian feared the man he had thus unexpectedly encountered; but he certainly experienced a momentary anxiety as to how the meeting would terminate.

"Will he kill me, or must I kill him?" involuntarily shaped itself as a question in his mind.

Then feeling the little fingers of "The Duke" closing round his windpipe, he saw that his only chance was to meet violence with violence. He was strong, supple, and agile; and throwing his long arms round his antagonist, he gave him a sudden squeeze, or hug, as it is technically termed, which caused the other to cry out, but not to release his hold. In the same moment they fell and were rolling over and over on the ground.

"Fiend! I will have your life!" gasped the stranger.

Dorian uttered not a word; but devoted himself wholly to the task of getting the upper hand in the encounter.

It was not easy. His long reach and great strength gave him advantages; but a blind fury rendered the other desperate—with the desperation of an animal, rather than a man—and he was not to be shaken off.

"You have had my life—the prime of my life," gasped the old man, "and now my turn comes, and I will have yours. I will have yours!"

His long fingers and bony knuckles dug deeper and yet deeper into the neck of the struggling doctor, who beheld with dismay the quickening fire of the eyes that glared into his, the rapid play of the facial muscles, the spasmodic drawing back of the lips over the sharp teeth, and the gathering foam, all denoting—madness.

Yes, he knew that he was struggling with a man over whom the desperation of the maniac was rapidly stealing—a desperation concentrated to one point, one object, one paramount instinct, that of his enemy's destruction.

Scarcely daring to turn his face, he yet contrived to glance round in the hope that aid might be nigh, and that a call for assistance might be responded to.

The hope was not gratified.

The darkening street was deserted.

He listened eagerly for footsteps. None were audible. It was so silent that the labouring breath of "the Duke" seemed to disturb the stillness.

"Madman!" he shrieked, nerving himself for one desperate effort, "you are mistaken. I am a stranger to you."

"'Tis false," shrieked the other.

"It's a delusion. We have never met before. Let me go."

"Never!"

"But this is murder."

"I know it."

"What! You mean to kill me?"

"Yes."

"Miserable wretch! What infatuation is this? Why should you seek my life?"

"You have had mine."

"Nonsense. You are mad. Loosen your hold. Let me go! Let me go!"

There was no answering word, but the grip of the intending murderer tightened, and Dorian had need of all his strength and adroitness to save himself from strangulation. The struggle between the two men became fierce, reckless, terrible. As they lay on the ground in the gloom, sometimes one, sometimes the other had the advantage; but struggle as he might, strike and hug as he might, Dorian was conscious that his efforts were directed against a foe of superhuman strength. Excitement and the infuriating effect of deadly passion were driving the escaped lunatic—"the Duke," of Harwood's private asylum—beyond the bounds of sanity, and a contest with a madman is as hopeless as with a wild beast of the jungle.

The struggle had reached its limit. The Italian was gasping, fainting. His antagonist, growing in strength, in spite of exhaustion, was gaining upon him. He felt that all was over; but still held on, when on a sudden, his efforts were paralysed, and the strife was over.

He did not know how it happened.

There was a sensation as of a blow, his eyes struck fire, he was falling forward headlong, a yell was ringing in his ears; he was sinking, sinking fathoms deep, and then—he had ceased to feel.

A blow on the head had caused all this, a blow dealt from a tolerably vigorous arm, and from behind, so that he was ignorant of the enemy by whom he had been assailed. He remained ignorant, too, of all that subsequently happened.

Strange that the blow of a fist, a stone, a hedge-row stake, should have the power of destroying temporarily or for ever, that mysterious something which we call intelligence, and without which we cease to be men! Strange, too, into what mysterious retreat of silence and half-death the soul betakes itself until the body resumes its vital functions, the heart beats anew, and with the restored circulation of the blood, there returns memory and all the functions of the intellect!

After a long interval, as it seemed, Dorian opened his eyes in a place strange to him, and by no means inviting in its aspect. He lay on a brick floor, plaster walls, relieved only by great damp-stains, rose around him, and overhead were the bare rafters supporting the floor of a room above.

A candle set on an upturned bucket dimly revealed this state of things, showing that it was a sort of cellar to which the Italian had been conveyed. Or it might have been a cell in a police-station. He could not tell which. He was lying, he found, upon an old sack—not absolutely ill, but with a burning, throbbing line across his head, where he had received the blow that drove the sense out of him.

On his moving to ascertain where he lay, there was another movement. The sound of a woman's rustling skirts caught his quick ear, and looking up, he perceived that Lola—the attendant of the dead Claudia Guiver—was crouching on the ground at his feet.

"You here?" he asked, feebly.

"Yes."

"Where am I then?"

"In my house."

"I recollect. It was close to your door that I was attacked by—"

"That you attacked him, say."

"No. I swear that. He came on me in an unguarded moment, and would have killed me but for something—what was it?—that happened."

"You received a blow."

"Ah, yes; I remember. You were there then? You saw it dealt?"

"What matters? It saved your life."

"Indeed! And he—where is the madman, the infuriated—?"

"Driven mad by your arts," the woman exclaimed, bitterly—"driven to desperation by your cruelty! Miserable victim of iniquitous plottings that he is, what would you further with him? Have you not heaped wrong enough upon his head? Must he perish to serve your ends, now, when all for which you have schemed and plotted and sinned is passing from your grasp only to fatten an impostor, and make him your master—master of you and your wicked colleague, body and soul?"

She uttered these words quickly and with infinite bitterness.

Dorian raised himself on one arm and peered into her face.

The faint light revealed it, dark and threatening, the brows contracted, the eyes flashing: loathing and distrust mingled in the glance with which she regarded the doctor.

"Rash and headstrong as ever!" he exclaimed.

"You will still talk of what you do not understand."

Lola tossed her head contemptuously.

"I am his foe, you say?" Dorian asked.

"I say? I—Is it not the truth?"

"No."

"Pshaw! I am not a child—a fool!"

"And yet I repeat—No! And again—No!"

Lola heard him with a curl of the lip.

"I tell you," he went on, "that but for me this man would have been in his grave. But for me, he would have died a violent death years and years ago. I saved him. On my own responsibility, at my own peril, I saved him, I tell you."

"Saved him from the grave to bury him alive! Oh, kind, generous, noble man! Let me take your hand—to spurn it, fiend!"

So bitterly, with such a concentrated intensity of feeling did the woman utter these words, that she could no longer content herself with the posture she had assumed, but started up and paced to and fro, to gain the relief which action always affords intense emotions.

"Enough of this," cried Dorian, sinking back on the ground. "You are blinded by your prejudice and folly. What did you discover when we last met? That it was not I who was hunting down this poor



wandering lunatic. That it was the impostor who claims to be the heir of the house of Edgcombe. And what did you promise? Was it not that you would denounce and expose him? And now you turn upon me, with the old blind hate and passion—and for what reason? Because this man has been spared, and has escaped the tolls of the impostor who hungers for his life.

"As you have done—as you yet do!"

Dorians started up.

"Is there never to be an end of this folly—this madness?" he exclaimed. "Would his death have served me in times past? If so, why did I not compass it? Will it serve me now? You yourself know that it will not, since it is upon his testimony that I rely to unmask the impostor who seeks to overthrow all that I have struggled to build up. I would save him. I would cure him of the fatal malady which you falsely lay to my account—falsely, for it is hereditary, and comes to him in the very blood that circulates in his veins! Have done then. Cease to babble, and to menace me. When you thought our common enemy had taken the life you prize, you were ready to make common cause with me in the white heat of your vengeance. What you then feared has not happened, and why? Because the victim has eluded the grasp of the assassin. But this may be only for a time. Where there is the will there comes the opportunity. Remember this, and be calm, be reasonable; above all, be prepared."

Lola listened intently to these words.

"Would to heaven that I could trust you!" she said.

"Absurd!" responded the Italian. "I would trust my direct foe where his interests prompted him to make common cause with me. It is so in this instance. This man—the pretender to the name of Balio Edgcombe—has done me a wrong, which I can never forget or forgive. I am burning to be revenged upon him. I have no other thought, wish, object or purpose in my life now. I will achieve it at any cost."

Lola reflected a moment.

"I do not believe you," she then said.

"No?"

"I can place no trust or confidence in you. Subtle, cruel, treacherous, and utterly wicked, I can have no part or lot with you. Murderer of my beloved mistress, I dare not listen to you or believe you. The promises I have made I withdraw. What I have undertaken I decline to fulfil. I will not denounce even an impostor to serve your ends. I will only exert myself to keep those whom I love and shelter out of the circle of your baleful influence. I mistrust, I fear—I hate you!"

Even while speaking, she retreated toward the door of the cellar.

"One question, infatuated woman," cried Dorians; "was he who interposed between me and the madman and dealt the blow that left me senseless, friend or foe?"

"Foe," cried Lola, exultingly; "bitter, implacable foe!"

"I know him, then?"

"You do. But not so well as you will know him; when you will curse the day that even your wickedness raised him up to be heaven's minister of retribution, and to visit your misdeeds on your devoted head!"

With this valediction, the woman flung wide the door and departed.

"Ignorant fool!" ejaculated the Italian. "What mystery now? Enough for me that there goes my great chance of vengeance. But I will not be defeated. I will crush the impostor. I will avenge my wrongs, yes—if I have to wipe them out in his blood!"

A glance of the eye and a hectic flushing of the cheek showed that this idea was not distasteful, that, on the contrary, his instincts lent themselves to it as those of the beast of prey incline to carnage.

For a long time he sat silent and motionless, thinking with unnatural intensity; then he suddenly pressed his hands to his head and burst out in one long, passionate, despairing wail:

"Oh, Juanita, my lost wife! My desolate home! My wrecked, foundered life!"

It was an hour after, that, with a glistening eye and firm-set teeth, he stole out of the cellar, and thence out of the house, with the noiseless step of the tiger creeping upon its prey, and nothing was seen of him until he entered the room in which Cheney Tofts lay, suffering from the effects of the exploding instrument of death, two days after.

## CHAPTER LXXVI

### LIVING IN CLOVER.

Ah, wasteful woman! She who may  
On her sweet self set her own price,  
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,  
How has she cheapened Paradise!

Coventry Patmore.

For the first time, Martin Harwood found himself, about this period of his existence, "living in clover."

The clover was represented by plenty of money, plenty of spirituous liquors, and plenty of tobacco. In these he revelled, and on these he fattened, blessing the day when it occurred to his son John, *alias* Cheney Tofts, to pass himself off for his dead friend and comrade, Balio Edgcombe, the younger, more familiarly known to us as Neville Onslow.

Up to that period, very little of the clover of life had fallen to his lot. It might rather be said that he had picked up a bare existence on rank grasses, choked with thistle and bitter weeds, and with nothing before him but the prospect of even this crop failing him altogether.

A private lunatic asylum is not a bower of bliss, even to the keeper of it, and there were many things which went to render Harwood's establishment less attractive than the majority of its kind. He had married a tall, gaunt woman—a mope faded copy of her sex, without colour, in hair, eyes, cheeks, or mind—but possessed of the savings of a grandmother, amounting to three hundred pounds. With this he had started the asylum, in a miserable house, in a lonely neighbourhood, where he hoped to be free from observation and molestation.

But things turned out crossly.

His faded wife did not fade out of the world so rapidly as might have been expected, and when she did go (after giving birth to her son John), it was suddenly, and under circumstances which a coroner's jury decided had a very ugly look.

Then the patients took to worrying, as he expressed it, and two or three died off—clearly money out of his pocket; and that again was objected to by another jury, who threatened to report the house to the Home Office unless it was rendered fit for human habitation, a work which required some money.

And so things went on, from bad to worse, always from bad to worse, and the asylum got a bad name, and Harwood found himself steeped to the chin in debt and difficulty, and grew dissolute, reckless, and utterly depraved.

He had but one hope and resource.

Not his son John; but his son John's friend, who having done all for the lad that it was possible for him to do, found himself bullied by the father for having made a gentleman of him to his ruin, seeing that he had no means of supporting a gentleman's life.

Again and again Neville Onslow had come to the man's relief; but never to any good purpose. There are people whom it is folly to help, the sort of people who won't help themselves, and Harwood was one of them.

So of late, Onslow had met his applications with stern refusals, and thus the tide of difficulty had risen higher and higher about the wretched man, until he appeared certain to be engulfed; when lo! at the last desperate moment, Onslow had met his fate, and Tofts had by a sort of inspiration decided on turning that casualty to his personal benefit.

In this design he needed the assistance of his despised, almost detested, father, and from that moment the aspect of things changed. The living in clover commenced, with a prospect of the pasture yielding an unlimited supply.

There was a little room in the asylum which Harwood called his office. But for the name it might have been mistaken for a tap-room, seeing that the office requisites consisted chiefly of long pipes, quart pots, stone bottles, and so on. Moreover, the atmosphere was replete with tobacco, and the subtle nose might have detected in addition, various distinct scents, the predominating one, next to the tobacco, being that of "old Jamaica."

In this retreat Harwood entertained his friends, and it happened one evening that two or three personages to whom we have been introduced were assembled there.

Foremost among them, occupying the seat on the right of the fire, as a place of honour becoming his position, there appeared Yool, the professional perjurer. The fire-light played on his foxy hair and whiskers, and as he screwed up his mouth in smoking a long clay pipe, it seemed as if he had received an extra peppering of freckles, so closely were they sown over his wrinkled forehead, and nose and cheeks. Next him sat the man who was called Tom, one of those recalled from Nestleborough, by Cheney Tofts' express orders, and not far from his side the taciturn Jim was accommodated with a seat. Martin Harwood himself occupied his own arm chair in the snugest corner by the fireside, and presented a face indicative of that stage of enjoyment, when a man either becomes boisterously offensive or quietly falls under the grate, just as it may happen.

For the greater convenience of this good company, a nine-gallon cask of stout had been lifted on to the table, where it formed a noble centre ornament, and flanked with a couple of stone spirit-bottles, one in a wicker case, was decidedly suggestive of making a night of it.

It was natural that among such a party the con-

versation should turn on a subject in which they were all more or less interested, namely, the murder of Neville Onslow, and the approaching trial of Gabriel Edgcombe as the murderer.

The assizes were to commence in two days.

Harwood mentioned this as a piece of intelligence of which he had received official information; and then passing the back of his hand across his eyes, added:

"Pore John! Pore lad!"

"You allude to your lost son, sir?" Yool inquired in his most sympathetic tone.

"In course. Who ought I to delude to?" demanded Martin, forgetting his grief, and assuming an unpleasantly defiant tone.

"To him—naturally," said the man Yool.

"Oh! All right. On'y I thought you might mean to insinuate—"

"Insinuate!"

Yool threw up his hands as if it had never occurred to him to insinuate anything to anybody in all his life.

"That's right, then," hiccupped the tipsy Martin.

"You recollect my pore son John, don't you?"

"Perfectly."

"You met him abroad somewheres, didn't you?"

"Yes. In France."

"Ex-actly. That's where young Balio Edgcombe, as call hisself Cheney Tofts for safety like, met him, adopted him, and made him his friend. Pore lad!"

"I recollect his mentioning the circumstance to me," said Yool, with the utmost coolness.

Harwood's drunken eyes expressed positive admiration at this coolness.

"Well you are a—— never mind," he checked himself in the act of speaking. "But now, looker here, as your mem'ry's so deuced good—"

"It is often my privilege to be able to render assistance in difficult and complex cases," Yool interrupted, repeating the set form of words with which he always introduced himself to strangers. "I have seen much of life at home and abroad, and—"

"Stow that, you old idiot," cried the angry asylum-keeper, "what's the use o' trying on that with me? As if I hadn't winter'd ye and summer'd ye, and didn't know ye for what ye are, good or bad? Now, harkes, you remember pore Jack, and you've met this here Edgcombe; now tell me—did Jack ever tell ye why it were he let t'other pass him off as the swell, when they came over to this country?"

"Well—really—I—"

"He didn't. Look here then—I will. Says young Edgcombe to him, 'It's more'n my life's worth,' says he, 'to go and claim my own in my own name.' 'Hang it, why?' says Jack—he were always fearless, he were, pore lad. 'But if you're afraid,' he says, 'let me go for'ard in your name at startin', and let 'em try any o' their capers on wi' me.' But young Edgcombe he wouldn't listen to it, and so 'twas settled as they should both take names as didn't belong to 'em at startin', and pore Jack he never lived to use his own name agin. Pore lad, pore lad!"

The man Tom, who had listened while in the act of raising a jug to his mouth, ventured a remark.

"Oh that were it, wor it?" he asked.

Harwood turned on him in drunken fierceness.

"Yes it were, Mr. Knowin', he retorted.

"Steady, gov'nor," cried Tom, "don't hurt yerself."

"What do ye mean by yer sneerin'?" the other demanded. "You think yourself jenced clever, don't ye? You think you know a deal, but I tell you wist, you may know too much for me, and talk too much for me, likewise; and on'y let me ketch you at it—that's all. Out you go, you and your mate! A sneak!"

The latter remark was thrown as a sort of missile at the immovable Jim, who half removed his pipe from his mouth as if with some idea of retorting, thought better of it, and put his pipe back again.

Not so Tom. He was hot and impulsive, and having intensified his heat and impetuosity with half a gallon of ale and the best part of a bottle of spirits, he was prepared for any form of encounter.

"Look here," he shouted, "there's two sides to this question, gov'nor. 'Taint because I've served you well, these twenty years, man and boy, that I'm to back you up in all your games. And for nothing too. Here's this nice party here—he jerked his thumb at Yool—"You're a-buying of him at his own price, and you'll have to buy metoo, or you won't have me! Will he, Jim?"

Jim grunted.

"Buy you?" cried Harwood. "What should I buy you for? I aint afraid of ye, Mr. Imperence."

"All right then; on'y look out for squalls—that's all."

"Squalls?" He caught up the one word, as a drunken man generally does, and threw it out as a question. "Squalls is it? You're a nice one, you are, talking to me about—squalls. If you've got anything to say, out with it. Out with it like a man, and let's know what 'tis."

Tom complied readily.

"Oh, if I'm to out with it, I'll out with it—quick enough," he exclaimed. "It's neither more or less than this here: You've swore, gov'ner—and this nice old party here, he's going to back you up—as it's your son John as was drowned, or murdered, or whatever it was—come by his death w'llent say: whereas I'll take my oath as it weren't nothing o' the sort—was it, Jim?—but that it's your son John as is trying to pass himself off as the right owner of the Edgecombe property. Now that's what I know, and what I'll swear to, if 'taint made worth my while to keep silent—won't I, Jim?"

As he turned to address his companion, the fire-shovel, hastily snatched up by Harwood, and thrown with all his might, whizzed past his head, but missing it, struck the unfortunate Jim in the temple, with a degree of violence that caused him to fall back senseless.

Then there ensued a desperate contest. Harwood, Yoch, and Tom were in a moment engaged in a fierce personal encounter. They struggled and fought with a fury reaching the verge of frenzy, till Harwood, disengaging himself, staggered across the room and rang a bell twice, and with a violence that caused it to reverberate through the house.

The scuffling of feet instantly succeeded, and two or three stalwart keepers rushed in.

"Put that scoundrel in the padded room," Harwood shouted, "and keep him there till I order him to be let out."

"You infamous——" Tom began.

But the keepers, accustomed to work of this sort, had gagged him and pinioned his arms in a second, and almost before he knew what was happening, he was being borne through the house to the padded room, designed for raving lunatics.

"That will settle his business," said Harwood, resuming his seat with tipsy complacency. "As to him"—and he kicked out at the fallen Jim—"he's harmless enough. I can manage 'im."

(To be continued.)

## THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

(Continued from No. 132.)

DIFFERENCE of opinion exists on the very important point as to whether the charitable foundations and public institutions established to mitigate suffering from certain social evils do not really in practice increase the disorders and suffering they are professedly founded to alleviate. Some social economists advocate, although few have the hardihood to do so now-a-days, the doctrine of *laissez faire*, even in the matter of legal provision for the absolute necessities of the poor. Some social evers (for the greater part non-contributors) are ever ready to denounce certain charities which have been founded, and are maintained by subscriptions and benefactions, which are the product of pure benevolence.

The Poor-law provision, it has been argued by the economists, encourages idleness; and labour-tests and stomach-tests of the severest kinds have been suggested and applied. The censors of some of the charities maintain that they encourage immorality and vice. Educational foundations, Magdalen and founding hospitals are especially obnoxious to these non-contributing purists.

If they only theorized as to the social and moral effects of the aid given to the inmates of the houses of mercy in question, the objectors might with much propriety be left entirely unnoticed. But they go further than this theorizing, and some of them ignorantly assume, and presumptuously assert, that all the great public charities are abused in the matter of admission to the benefits they are designed to confer, or in the administration of their funds. With respect to some of them we have heard allegations, unsupported by proof, however, which almost make the blood curdle, as indicating degrees of moral turpitude and ineffable meanness, too base to be believed, except upon the most conclusive testimony. The Foundling Hospital has not escaped this species of slander.

We have not hesitated to direct attention to the abuse or malversation of the funds of any charity we have dealt with. In the case of the benefactions of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, and the manner in which these are now applied, we felt disposed to adopt the motto, "Cry aloud and spare not." And, further, we hold it to be a grievous wrong to the really needy applicants, that, in the case of an educational "charity," a string of private carriages, each containing an applicant for admission, should be ranged in front of the entrance to the "Almoners' door," and that these applicants should have preference over those who have "no influence," no claim, but need. But these circumstances do not touch nor affect certain other charities, and ought not to be allowed to dam the stream of benevolence that should naturally flow towards them.

The worst, in so far as we know, that is "on record" regarding any admission to the Foundling Hospital, is contained in the doggerel lines attached to the clothes of one of the infants taken in above 100 years ago.

Pray use me well, and you will find  
My father will not prove unkind  
Unto that nurse who's my protector,  
Because he is a benefactor.

There is also a legend of the daughter of a general in the army having formed a liaison, and who had her child placed in this hospital. Her father proving relentless, she committed suicide. The general was not a governor of the Foundling Hospital.

The early history of this hospital, and the mode of admitting infants, is painfully interesting. The good Captain Coram, whose avocations gave him a valid excuse for being out late o' nights, was often shocked by what he saw in Rotherhithe and in the east of London of the exposure and desertion of infants. He inquired into the probable causes of the evils that appalled him, of such monstrous abandonment of the common instincts of nature and humanity.

He discovered what he supposed to be the true source of the evil—that the female who fell a victim to seduction was cut off from respectable companionship and consigned to disgrace. Hence the crime of child desertion, and even child murder, "to avoid her shame." Captain Coram laboured for many years to accomplish his object, and at last succeeded in getting the Foundling Hospital established by royal charter.

The charter to found the hospital was obtained in 1739, and in March, 1741, the governors commenced operations by taking temporarily certain houses in Hatton Garden, and adapting them as nurseries for infants.

The first admission of twenty children was by advertisement. The conditions were that the children should be under two months old, that they should be free from "the evil, leprosy, or disease of the like nature." The person bringing the child had to "ring a bell at the inward door, and not go away until the child is returned or notice given of its reception." "No questions whatever were to be asked of any person bringing a child," and servants endeavouring to discover who such person was, did so at the risk of dismissal. Persons who brought children were requested to affix some "particular writing, or other mark or token, so that the children may be known hereafter if necessary."

Soon after the opening of the hospital, as its object became known, the applicants increased greatly, and a hundred women would be seen scrambling and fighting at the doors, when only twenty children could be admitted.

It would appear from the very exhaustive and able records of Mr. Brownlow that Captain Coram was fully alive to the delicacy and difficulty of conducting such a charity as that he had called into existence, and he accordingly prayed in his memorial to George II. "that due and proper care should be taken for setting on foot so necessary an establishment."

Captain Coram did not give satisfaction to all the friends of the hospital. He begged himself with his philanthropic projects, and a Mr. Anthony Allen graciously advanced to "that indefatigable schemist, Captain Thomas Coram, for his immediate subsistence," a sum of sixteen guineas, and stated, rather pompously, in his will, that he had really intended "some considerable benefaction;" but for proposals pressed upon the governors by "the said Coram." Mr. Allen at his death left £200 to the charity, in addition to "the said sixteen guineas so paid." The captain, it would seem, would have been more popular in his day if he had been more plastic. But, Mr. Anthony Allen's displeasure to the contrary notwithstanding, "the said Coram's" memory flourishes green, and will do for many generations yet to come.

From 1741 to 1766, the average number of children received was ninety-two per annum, or 1,384 in all. The governors aspired to the conduct of a much wider charity than that they had hitherto administered, and they applied to Parliament for State aid. Solomon says there is "nothing new under the sun," and the "social evil," and infanticide, and projects for their cure, would seem to be amongst the immutabilities.

Parliament readily decreed that all children offered at the hospital should be received; that State aid for the maintenance of the hospital was indispensable, and would be given; that branch establishments should be set up in all counties, ridings, or divisions of the kingdom, for the reception of deserted and exposed infants. As was most meet, Parliament gave the governors a pecuniary guarantee in carrying out this vast scheme of charity.

The effect of these resolutions was disastrous. The Legislature created a Frankenstein which they could not control, and which they had finally to kill. On the first day for general reception, after the resolutions

took effect, 117 children were deposited, in rapid succession, in the basket hung outside of the gates of the hospital. The workhouses were emptied of infant poor; brutal fathers robbed their wives of newly-born infants, and conveyed them to the Government sanctuary; travelling tinkers, harridans without feeling, and ruffians of both sexes, engaged openly in the new trade of conveying infants from distant parts of the country to the London Foundling Hospital—a large percentage of the infants, as may be supposed, perishing on the way.

It was publicly stated in the House of Commons that one man in charge of five infants, whom he engaged to convey to the Foundling Hospital, got drunk; went to sleep on a common, and found three of his charge dead when he awoke. Of eight infants brought to town in a waggon, seven at the end of the journey needed sepulture, not nursing. The price for conveying children from Yorkshire in paildriers was eight guineas a trip, until competition brought down the rate.

In many instances the heartless wretches who engaged in this nefarious trade stripped their poor little victims, and left them naked in the hospital basket. Some years since an aged baker, in the north of England, who had been brought up in the Foundling, made inquiry as to his origin—all the information the books afforded was that he had been "left in the basket naked."

Under the system of indiscriminate admission, the hospital became a charnel-house rather than a nursery. The due care of the enormous number of infants thrown upon the charity was beyond the powers of any institution. In the first year 3,296 infants were admitted; in the second, 4,085; in the third, 4,229; and during less than ten months of the fourth year, 3,324—that is, in less than four years, 15,934 infants were cast upon the care of the public. Of this number only 4,400 survived to be apprenticed; and the frightful mortality thus indicated cannot be wondered at if the frail tenure of infant life is kept in view, and the toil and care involved in infant training.

A nurse has a very full handful with two infants, but if mothers—the natural, the best, and cheapest nurses—are to be released wholesale from the discharge of their natural duties, the result in infant mortality, and the money cost to the community, cannot fail to be very serious.

The House of Commons failed to adopt the cautionary suggestion of Captain Coram as to "due and proper care" in the conduct of the charity, and finding that they had established a market for vice, they retraced their steps, and resolved, "That the indiscriminate admission of all children under a certain age in the hospital had been attended with many evil consequences, and that it be discontinued."

It is passing strange that, notwithstanding these recorded and indisputable facts, as to the effect of indiscriminate admission, we should have in this year of grace 1865 a movement to revivify the monster of last century.

It is well that a determined appeal should be made to Parliament, as we learn is to be done in next session, to adopt measures "to check the frightful sacrifice of infant life," but we cannot think that this will be accomplished by again hanging up the basket at the gate of the Foundling Hospital. Yet such seems to be the view of a number of gentlemen who have taken this subject into their consideration, as appears from the following petition, which it is stated has been extensively although privately signed:—

"To the Hon. the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland assembled, the petition of the undersigned most respectfully sheweth,—That your petitioners view with much anxiety the prevalence and vast increase in the destruction of infant life. That your petitioners believe the present state of the law is most unsatisfactory, and requires amendment. That the provisions of the statute 7th and 8th of Victoria, cap. 101, which throw the whole burden on the mother, and prohibit inquiry by the parochial authorities, are the means of inflicting great hardship upon the woman, and have led to the increase of infanticide. That your petitioners feel deeply the want of some institution in which illegitimate children could be received; and also that a wealthy institution with the avowed object of receiving children of illicit intercourse at its gates, and which has grown wealthy under that assumption, has now for many years past ceased to exercise the functions of a foundling hospital; and your petitioners wish that your Hon. House would direct the attention of the Charity Commissioners to this neglect of its primitive principle. Your petitioners therefore pray your Hon. House to take steps for the repeal of the said Act of the 7th and 8th of Victoria, cap. 101, and for a full inquiry into the laws as regards illegitimate sons, to place them upon a more equitable basis as respects both parents, and for the proper application of the funds of the London Foundling Hospital. And your petitioners



further pray for a strict investigation into the causes (with a view to its prevention) which render the dreadful crime of infanticide so prevalent at present."

We have no retainer from the governors to advocate their case. We have had no intercourse whatever with any of the principal officers of the institution, but we have had, as everybody else may have, free admission to all parts of the hospital open to the public, and to much greater freedom than would be allowed, we believe, in the case of an *abused* charity. We have also had access to all the accounts of the charity from its commencement, and these are all that the most fastidious accountant could desire. The governors are doubtless able to defend their powers and mode of selection.

## AHAB THE WITTY.

### CHAPTER VII.

The question now arose—which way to direct their flight?

The Knight of the Red Cross, being unacquainted with the country, felt himself incompetent to advise, while Ali made numerous suggestions, none of which seemed worthy of attention.

When the wisdom of each was exhausted, the princess hinted her wish that Ahab, who throughout the discussion had maintained absolute silence, should be consulted.

The eccentric youth was therefore appealed to. He was not in the least put to it for an answer.

"There are places in these mountains where you might hide the armies of the Christian king, if one could but stumble upon them. I believe I know the dwelling of a persecuted Jew, which will be just the thing we want. I chanced to discover it by accident, and have kept my and his secret ever since. If it be your highness's will that I lead you thither, you have only to say so. He may receive you in a friendly manner, or perchance he may betray you to one you know of, and whom, by the aid of my tongue, my new master knows of—the cruel, unnatural, restless old King of Granada!"

Both Boabdil and his sister for a moment appeared greatly troubled and perplexed. The first, too, was angry with the wayward Ahab, while the latter manifested alarm and embarrassment.

"My brother," she said, "no secrets can be kept from this inquisitive and sharp-witted boy. Were it not for his uniform faithfulness, I should fear to trust him."

"Glorious-eyed beauty," quoth Ahab, "divinely-tempered princess, Ahab, by the will of heaven, will serve you till your brother is seated on the throne of Granada! You can doubt me, or you can trust me. It's all the same."

"Unfortunate prince and princess," said Mornay, with the most profound respect, "regret not that I am the possessor of your history. I have heard of the cruel conduct of your father, Muley Ben Hassan, who, darkened by superstition and groundless misapprehension, decreed to slay his own offspring, to thwart a mischievous and idle prediction. I know that La Horra, 'the Chaste,' with her son, Mahomet Abdallah, generally called Boabdil, were confined in the tower of Comares, one of the most notable of the many similar structures of the Alhambra. The king was baffled in his intentions to annul the truth of the prophecy with the sword—frustrated by the devotion of the mother. A trusty servant received private directions to wait below the Alhambra at the hour of midnight near the river Darro, with an Arabian courser fleet as the wind. The slighted and wronged sultana awaited, with all the tender trepidations of a mother's soul, till silence and darkness brooded over the palace; then knotting together the scarfs, shawls, and veils of herself and attendants, she lowered the unlucky prince from the tower of Comares with singular success, when he made his escape on the horse that had been provided by her forethought. But I must confess that I never received the least knowledge of or was led to believe that a youthful princess shared his flight."

"The story, so far as you have related it," answered Boabdil, in a pensive voice, "is wonderfully correct. Though it be not universally known that a sister shared my dangerous deliverance, and subsequent exile and persecution, such was the case. Since you are aware of our identity and misfortunes, I have no doubt but I may confide entirely in your generosity, and that the secret will never be spoken to my detriment."

"On this cross, unhappy prince," cried Sir Raoul, with emotion, "I swear to treat you as a friend and brother, and to do all in my power to restore you to your own! To the beautiful and accomplished princess, your sister, I vow absolute obedience and faith; and were she a queen, she could not find among her subjects so devoted a slave as Raoul Mornay. My

sword and my lance are hers; and lest you should misunderstand me, I will add that I expect nothing in return and no other reward than the consciousness of serving one so worthy of knightly fealty. In being her servant, I feel that I am more highly honoured than in being the lord of a province."

When the Knight of the Red Cross ended this courteous declaration, he bent his dark plumes to the mane of his horse.

The princess blushed deeply. "It is a poor service, brave cavalier, to which you have thus magnanimously devoted your sword and lance. For the sake of your merit and deservings, I wish it were better; but it were ungraceful in me, even in my low estate, to refuse an arm so gallantly offered," answered Leoline, with mingled enthusiasm and timidity.

The black plumes of Mornay sank again to his steed's neck. Boabdil remained dejected and silent.

"Fair princess and mistress of my actions, I thank you most abundantly for your condescension," responded Mornay. "I will acknowledge no dominion but thine till thy brother sits on the throne of Granada."

"Alas, worthy Christian, I fear your bondage will be long!"

The princess spoke in a sweet and pensive voice, and sighed, and that sigh was echoed by Boabdil.

"Sir Raoul Mornay," said the latter, "you have devoted yourself to the fortunes of an unlucky prince."

"Noble Boabdil, banish that accursed word from your thoughts! It is a miserable word, and breeds misfortune out of itself. Find but present security, and your name will by-and-by rally those around your standard who love your cause and person, and are dissatisfied with the reign and cruelties of your father."

The Knight of the Red Cross delivered himself of these thoughts with striking earnestness.

The prince was touched.

"I confess," he said, "that your speech hath a wholesome and natural sound; and by the assistance of Allah, I will profit by it."

Just then Ahab pricked up to Mornay's side, and said:

"Something like a dozen horsemen are pursuing us, and their steeds seem fresh and sturdy. They come with lances in rest and Damascus blades jingling at their sides."

"By St. Jago, it is true!" exclaimed Sir Raoul, casting his eyes downward towards the luxuriant valley they had crossed but a half-hour before.

"Ah!" murmured Leoline, "a new danger has come, just as I was beginning to take heart."

"Fear not those who approach, sovereign lady of my sword and lance; for, by the help of the saints, the prince and myself will speedily overthrow and put them to flight. In fact, I rejoice at an opportunity to fight under the eyes of her to whom I have vowed allegiance."

"A dozen to two is bad odds," said Ahab, phlegmatically; "and if they do not break those iron pots on your heads, it will be the strangest thing that has happened yet. For myself, I should rather trust to my heels than to those long spikes you carry with so much satisfaction."

"Trust in whatever you like," growled Ali, "and don't worry your betters by your impudence."

"Those horsemen," said Boabdil, "are excellently mounted, and follow at a swinging pace. I fear we shall not be able to get away from them."

"I would suggest," answered Mornay, "that Ahab and the other attendants go forward with your sister in the direction of the Jew's dwelling, while you and I keep at an easy distance behind, and if necessary, show those fellows who come on so confidently the quality of our courage."

This proposition was at once acceded to, as presenting the best prospect for insuring the safety of Leoline; but before they had passed the crown of the eminence which they were ascending, the pursuers were within hailing distance of Boabdil and Sir Raoul, and spurring up the acclivity at a sound rate.

"Halt, and reveal your purpose!" cried Mornay, raising his voice. "If you come on in this fashion, some of you will speedily bite the dust."

"Our business," answered the leader of the party, "is not with you so much as with the person beside you; therefore, if you would avoid injury, ride away quietly, for this matter concerns not you."

"On the contrary, you will soon discover that it concerns me much. Turn back, or prepare to meet us like true men. Let two of you ride forward and encounter us two," said Mornay.

"Think not we will be guilty of such folly! We will not lose the advantage of numbers."

"Your reply indicates that you are but mean-spirited and common varlets, unworthy to match a true knight in full course," returned Mornay, contemptuously.

"Parley not with the traitorous dogs!" said Boabdil. "I trust I may one day hang some of them from the towers of the Alhambra. Close your vizor and have at them!"

The Knight of the Red Cross laid his long ashen lance in rest, commended himself to heaven and his mistress, and with her scarf fluttering over his dented armour, thundered down upon the Moorish horsemen like a rock loosened from the mountain.

The impatient horse shared the excitement of his master, and with his dark ears laid back, his eyes burning like coals, his nostrils distended, his mouth open, and his white teeth gleaming like ivory, he presented, when taken in conjunction with the imposing figure of his rider, an object that filled them with dismay.

But one man of the twelve had courage enough to meet him, and he was stricken from his saddle as if he had been a shape of straw.

Passing the discomfited Moor, he unseated another with his lance, overturned a third, both horse and rider, and then drawing his sword, laid about him in good earnest.

Boabdil, at that crisis, swept with great impetuosity into the midst of them, while they stood confounded, and did such execution that they were fain to turn and ignominiously fly.

Mornay and the prince pursued them to the foot of the hill, slaying several outright, and leaving but four in a condition to return to the Alhambra.

### CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Sir Raoul drew rein to return, the first object he saw was Leoline, waving her veil.

To his chivalric heart, it was a welcome sight. He put spurs to his black steed and reached her long before Boabdil.

He received her commendations with a modesty as great as his merit.

"I have seen many hard encounters," said the grey-bearded Ali, "but never a victory more gallantly achieved. Happy is the lady fair who has thy loyal obedience in the keeping of her word and smile."

Mornay bowed gratefully to the old serving-man; his words were welcome, being spoken in the hearing of the queen of his heart.

"We must not forget, good Ali, that to the prince, your master, we mainly owe the success of this passage-at-arms," said Sir Raoul.

"The brave," observed the Princess Leoline, "are always generous, and never overlook the deservings of others."

Boabdil now joined them, flushed with the warlike exercise, and elated at the result.

"Brother," said Leoline, "you have well merited the favour of lady bright, to speak in the phraseology of the Frank, and I regret that there is not some divine creature here to toss you her glove."

"If that divine creature had a hand half as small as yours, it would be of no sort of service to his worship, for he would not be able to wear it on his little finger; and I scarcely know what a thing is good for unless it can be worn or eaten," said Ahab, thinking he was called upon to express an opinion.

"But," he added, "you had better not tarry here in complimentary discourse, which, to be plain, is of no account; but follow me as fast as you can."

Each, perceiving this to be sensible advice, was very willing to proceed; so they set forward, hoping for the best.

"Think you," asked Sir Raoul, when he had an opportunity of speaking privately with Ahab, "that we can rely, with any certainty, on the kindness of the Jew you have mentioned?"

"In regard to him, two things you may count on without doubt; he will receive you, or he will not. If he receives you civilly, you will be civilly received; if he turns you away uncivilly, you will be uncivilly turned away. And that is the truth, if I ever spoke it."

"And what is your opinion, sage Ahab?" queried Mornay, who had learned how to humour the eccentricities of the Moorish youth.

"It is this: if he will not admit us willingly, we will find a way to make him change his mind. It were no hard matter to batter in his door, or smoke him and his daughter out of his stone palace, like foxes out of their hole. After we get hold of him, a taste of the bastinado will no more than pay him for his churlishness. But whether he refuse or comply, submit or remain obstinate, fall on our necks and kiss us, or drive us away with Israelitish hounds, it is all the same!"

"You spoke of a stone palace. What meant you by that?"

"You must know that these mountains have been inhabited by many races of men; and there are to be found among them ancient castles and curious excavations, erected and wrought by nobody knows

whom. There are often found vast chambers cut in solid rock, that have more the seeming of subterranean palaces than anything else. And my bearded Jew, Sadoc, burrows in one of these, so ingeniously contrived, that both air and light are freely admitted."

"You spoke also of a daughter?"

"I did, most valorous; and you may go far before you will find such another bit of Israelitish beauty. But as my taste runs, I am as well satisfied with Nicolette, her handmaiden," replied Ahab, with extreme complacency.

"I think I see what turns the weather-vane," said Sir Raoul, smiling. "You made good use of your time, doubtless, when you had access to this Nicolette."

"I can't deny but I practised my best graces, and showed my wit to the best advantage; and I flatter myself that when I undertake to be agreeable, nobody in the world can come within a mile of me. Knowing that I shall win or lose, I give myself no uneasiness about the result, certain that I shall die at just the same identical moment in either case. No damsel, though ever so pretty, ever kept a man from dying. Woman can produce heartaches, and manifold other diseases, but I'll be blamed if she can cure the simplest complaint, except hunger."

"How far is it to the stone palace of Sadoc?"

"I cannot tell. I think we might reach it in three hours, with moderate travelling."

Sir Raoul had too much good sense to press his company much upon Leoline.

Sometimes he rode in advance, close to their guide, Ahab, at others dropped behind; but never, unless addressed by Boabdil, placed himself near the princess; and when he ventured to do so, exercised such judgment and delicacy, that she could not help being flattered by his discretion.

In this way he imperceptibly gained an advantage over her, a woman always being ready to grant those little attentions which cost her no effort, yet give much pleasure, providing they are not abused and misconstrued by masculine vanity. In short, the Knight of the Red Cross was making good progress in the esteem of Leoline, though not perhaps sensible of the fact.

They continued their slight without further interruption until two hours after sunrise, when they entered a very mountainous and rocky region, where they curved and wound about strangely through passes and defiles.

They came, at length, to a narrow yet verdant ravine, through which trickled musically a small stream of water, a thousand wild flowers drawing nourishment from its moisture, giving it perfume in return. Crossing this, a mountain of rock defied their further progress.

"We have finished our journey," said Ahab. "We have arrived at the stone palace of Sadoc, the Jew."

"I see no palace of any kind!" growled Ali.

"Nor would one of your dullness ever discover it," replied Ahab. "Horseflesh, my masters, can go no further."

Ahab, the Witty sprang to the ground and passed between the large rocks, separated just enough to allow a convenient passage, and then ran up what appeared to be natural steps in the nearly perpendicular side of the mountain. He leaped nimbly from step to step like a goat.

This proceeding was watched with interest by those who had trusted to his fidelity, and whose safety depended so much upon the event.

Ahab stood presently on a small shelf, which seemed to owe nothing to the art of man for its peculiar shape.

Picking up a small stone, he struck several distinct blows on the rock, which on that side formed nearly the entire face of the mountain. The utmost silence followed this knocking. Old Ali muttered, and Boabdil showed signs of impatience. Nothing discouraged, Ahab let fly his blows again with increased vigour.

"Let him thump!" said Ali, "and that is all the good it'll do. Perhaps he expects the mountain to open, and an enchanted palace to appear!"

This sneer had scarcely died on the grumbler's lips when a voice responded from the interior of the rock, with a peculiarly muffled and hollow sound.

"Who disturbs me," it said, "at my morning prayers?"

"It is a friend that knocks," answered Ahab.

"Who taught you the signal?"

"One of your own household, worthy Sadoc. Remember you not my voice?"

"I know nobody's voice. Go away, whoever you are, and vex not one who has renounced the world and all its vanities," replied Sadoc, in a querulous tone.

"Not so, pious Israelite. You have with you a daughter and a maiden; and daughters and maidens are the greatest vanities in the world. I am Ahab, the youth who chanced once to do you a friendly turn, and discovered also your retreat."

"Are you alone?" asked Sadoc, cautiously.

"I cannot say that I am; but I am so near alone that there are but six with me, all told."

"What does the young heathen say? Do my ears deceive me? Begone, you whelp of idolatry! I have no entertainment for sojourners within my narrow cell."

"We'll see about that!" retorted Ahab. "I have a bag of a certain black powder with me, which, if crammed into the crevices of thy door, and set on fire, will blow you smack into the bosom of Abraham."

"God of my fathers!" groaned Sadoc. "When will our persecutions cease?"

"When you open the door," answered Ahab, practically. "But lest you should not, I will begin stuffing in the same black powder I mentioned."

"Of what degree are those with you?"

"Of any or all degrees, just as it may best suit you. But I can tell you that they are many degrees impatient at your delay. Also, that there is a lady among them more beautiful than your daughter Salome, who stands much in need of rest and refreshment."

"I am afraid, importunate stripling, to admit strangers within my gates. It is a time of persecution and distress among my people. We know not how to distinguish friend from foe. Our confidence is often abused, and our faith tampered with. Our slow and painful accumulations are unjustly wrested from us, and we have no city nor abiding-place on the earth."

"All of which," answered Ahab, "has nothing to do with the subject. I swear by the Prophet that you shall not be harmed by those I bring. They are as hunted and miserable as ever was a descendant of Israel. They want neither your gold, nor your daughter, nor your life, nor your faith. They will bring a blessing and not a curse."

"Stop one moment, young heathen, while I look at them. I would see in what array they come."

"Let your observations be short, or the rocks will soon be tumbling about your head."

"I see," said Sadoc, and his voice came from a greater distance than before, "two cavaliers in full armour, with dreadful spears in their hands, and swords girt at their loins, bestriding mighty beasts of war. My heart misgives me, young Ahab! I am betrayed into the hands of men of blood, that do battle with carnal weapons."

At this stage of affairs, Sir Raoul, losing all patience, cried out:

"In the name of the Holy Patriarcha, old man, cast aside your cowardly fears, and give shelter, if in your power, to a fair lady in distress. Refuse a request so reasonable, and I swear by those Books of the Law which you profess to revere, to enter your rocky fortress by force!"

"The will of heaven be done!" muttered Sadoc, and presently he was seen standing beside Ahab.

(To be continued.)

## EVA ASHLEY.

### CHAPTER XXVIII. A SUDDEN RETROTHAL.

"WHAT do you say to grandpa's proposal, Bessie?" he mechanically asked; and he stretched forth his arm, fearing that she might faint, and fall without support.

But Bessie rallied quickly, and with more spirit than either of the listeners expected, she replied:

"I am sorry to thwart grandpa, but our marriage cannot yet take place. We are both too young and inexperienced to assume the serious duties of life. I have always been told that we were to be married some day, but there is no need of being in a hurry. We can pledge ourselves to grandpa, that even if he is removed from us we will consider his wishes as sacred, and at some future day fulfil the contract we can form now for his satisfaction."

"Bless the child! how glibly she talks, and how sensibly, too," said the squire. "If I believed that you would only adhere to the contract, Bessie, it would answer my purpose just as well; but how am I to feel assured that neither you nor Frank may prove inconstant?"

"Ay," broke in the persuasive voice of Mrs. Ashley, "that is the vital point at issue. Better far will it be for you to remove temptation from your hearts, by vowing them to each other without further delay. It is the strongest wish of my heart to see you and Frank united, Bessie, as it is that of your grandfather. I know that you are suited to each other, and happiness must crown your union."

"But we are first cousins, Minny; and to tell you the truth, I don't care about marrying one so nearly related to me. Frank seems almost like my brother," pouted Bessie.

"Pooh! cousins marry every day, and so far as I

know, they are as happy and prosperous as those that are not related. Bessie, have you no respect for Squire Ashley's wishes and mine? I scarcely expected this opposition from you."

In spite of this rebuke, Bessie persisted:

"I can't see why you and grandpa insist that Frank and I shall be married, when we neither of us wish it for several years to come. There is plenty for us both, and I had rather give Frank the whole estate than give him my hand before I understand my own heart sufficiently to know whether he is the man I ought to marry."

Mrs. Ashley was about to reply, but Frank broke in:

"Why Bessy, you little casuist, why should you doubt that? I am a right proper fellow, and I mean to make you the best of husbands. If I don't profess to adore you, and all that, I love you just as dearly as I can; as to the money, I don't see how that is concerned in it; the law will divide it between us, I suppose, after giving Minny her third. But I hope grandpa will live many years yet to enjoy his own."

"Thank you, lad, but my course is almost run. Has it never occurred to you, Frank, that I may make a will, and make obedience to its provisions on the part of yourself and Bessie imperative upon you, if you would hereafter enjoy my wealth?"

Wentworth looked surprised, and presently said:

"I had no idea, sir, that you would think it necessary to compel Bessie and myself to choose each other. We are well enough disposed to obey your wishes, if you will give us time to make our own arrangements."

"I hoped that no compulsion would be necessary. I certainly do most ardently desire to see you and Bessie united; and I have neglected nothing which can insure the fulfilment of my wishes. You seem well enough disposed to gratify me, Frank, but I am sorry to see in Bessie a rebellious spirit, which will not contribute to her future happiness."

His pained tone struck upon the sensitive heart of Bessie, and in a moment she was kneeling beside him, holding his hand in hers, and, with quick penitence she said:

"My dear, dear grandpa, I am quick of temper and free of speech, but I will no longer oppose you. If your heart is set on this thing, I will not thwart you. I am but a silly child, but if Frank is willing to take me as I am, I will not refuse to obey you. We might have waited till we were older and wiser, but if you command me to do so, I will give him my hand at once, and try and make him a good wife."

Squire Ashley passed his hand caressingly over her bowed head, and said:

"That is right, and you are my own good child again. Come, Frank—name the day on which you will take this submissive little martyr—for better, for worse."

"The sooner the better," was the ready response. "Since we are to be executed, let it be without delay. Don't look so solemn, Bessie; it will only be like taking a cold douche, and when it's over, we shall both feel the better for it. I know that I shall be as happy as a king—ought to be; and I promise to treat you en prince. There, darling, don't let me see tears in your lovely eyes, because they are giving you to me for my wife."

Dimples broke over the chaming mouth of the young girl, and she dashed away her tears as she placed her hand in that of Wentworth, and said:

"You are a dear good boy, Frank, and I hope that I can love you as—as I ought. But you must give me time—you know we cannot school the heart all at once. Besides, it is so humdrum to marry somebody I have known all my life, with no romance, no difficulty about it."

Frank raised her hand to his lips, and laughingly replied:

"Oh! oh! little sentimental, that is where the shoe pinches, is it? We can get up some difficulties after we are married, you know. I have read some nice stories about ladies married without their full consent learning to love their husbands all the better after they were united for not caring a pin for them beforehand. We will follow in their footsteps, Bessie, and I will prove such a fascinating fellow that you will never be able to resist me. So that objection is settled, I hope."

The listeners could only laugh at this nonsense, and Mrs. Ashley said:

"I may congratulate you then, my dears, on the event which is soon to come on. Since you are both agreed as to the expediency of a speedy union, I will name the day. Let it be to-morrow."

"So soon!" exclaimed Bessie, in dismay. "Oh, Minny, I shall have no time to get ready."

"Nonsense, child, you have everything you can need, even if you are married at once. You are not going on a bridal tour, and I flatter myself that your wardrobe is always sufficiently supplied for such a change as you meditate."



Bessie would still have demurred, but Frank spoke with a tender joyfulness in his tones that contradicted the lightness of his words.

"Come, little wife, since you must be a victim, submit to the sacrifice gracefully, and gain some credit for making it."

Bessie became very pale, but she quietly replied: "Since there is no escape from the destiny that has been awarded us, we may as well consent to fulfil it at once. I am afraid that you will have the worst part of the bargain, Frank, for I am not naturally of a very submissive temper, and I may prove anything but a suitable wife for you."

"I am willing to risk it," was the confident reply; and Squire Ashley heartily said:

"Then it is settled, and to-morrow afternoon the parson can come over and marry you as quietly as Daisy and I were united."

Bessie kissed him, and whispered:

"Let me go to my room now, grandpa, to think over all this. It seems so strange, and I am in such a flutter, that I must have time to compose my spirits before I can realize that I have actually promised my hand to Frank to-morrow."

"Go, then, my pretty one, and think only of how happy you are going to be with so gallant and handsome a husband."

She eluded the attempt of the young man to take her hand, and glided from the apartment, which he also immediately left.

Well satisfied with the last hour's work, Mrs. Ashley sat stroking the wrinkled hand of her husband and talking to him in a low tone, till he fell asleep again, and slumbered on till twilight gathered around them.

The labour of so many years was nearly accomplished, she believed, and in a few hours Bessie would be safe.

As the wife of the heir, she was sure of her daughter's future position as mistress of Ashurst, and her scheming mind felt the gratifying assurance that the great object of her life was on the eve of attainment.

The lamp was lighted, and the tea brought in. Mrs. Ashley aroused herself from her reverie in time to pour out the steaming liquid, and put into the squire's cup the exact quantity of cream and sugar he liked.

He smiled on her as he quaffed it.

"Hebe never served more delicious nectar to the gods than this, and I have my doubts whether she was half as charming as my handmaiden."

She laughed merrily and replied:

"You are a dear old flatterer, but I am not vain enough to credit half the pretty things you say of me."

His reply was interrupted by the appearance at the door of the lad whose business it was to visit the neighbouring post-office and bring back the mail.

He carried a small bag in his hand which seemed quite full, and the squire set down his cup as he said:

"I do hope there is a letter from France. It is so long, so long since I heard, that I am uneasy. Pray examine the mail as quickly as you can, my dear, and if you find a foreign letter read it to me before looking further."

Mrs. Ashley unlocked the bag and poured its contents on the table.

The most of them proved to be newspapers and magazines, but at the very bottom was found a letter from Mrs. Leon Ashley.

She broke the seal, glanced down the page, slightly changed colour, and prepared to read at the command of her husband, though she greatly feared the effect of the tidings it contained.

"Vienna, May 5, 18—

"DEAR UNCLE,—I write to you without the knowledge of my poor Leon, who is confined to his bed with an illness from which I sadly fear he will never recover.

"The climate of this place does not agree with him, and of late years his habits have been such that his constitution is prematurely broken down. I do not wish to complain of my husband, and I have hitherto borne with everything in silence, because I married him for love, and meant what I said when I took him 'for better or for worse.'

"But endurance, even on the part of a devoted wife, has its limits, and mine has at length failed me. Of late, Leon has given himself up to gambling and drinking to such excess as would terrify you if you were near him and could witness his mad acts.

"Even with our large income, he has long kept me on the most limited allowance, and his failure to pay all his gambling debts drove him from Paris to this place.

"I hoped the change would restore him to his senses, but he finds here plenty who have the same passion for dissipation which is destroying him, and our pecuniary condition is no better than when we came hither.

"I have taken advantage of Leon's illness to tell you the exact truth about our circumstances, in the hope that you can do something to produce a change for the better.

"We are living in lodgings in this city, which are positively shabby for people of respectable condition. We have but two servants, one of whom is Evelyn's nurse, who will not consent to leave her. My son has been brought from England and placed at school here, and he is making great progress in his studies; he is a tall boy now, and a very handsome one, I must say, though strangers do say that he greatly resembles me.

"Evelyn has been removed from her fashionable Parisian school, because her father found that he could no longer afford to keep her there. She is quite a young lady now, and should be introduced into society, but Leon will not listen to such a thing, and seems anxious to keep her entirely to himself. I have no voice in the matter, for I have lost all influence over my husband, and the language he often uses to me is dreadful.

"He now lies before me in a heavy slumber, looking as ghastly as if dead. The stimulants that are destroying him I am compelled to give him in small quantities to prevent him from sinking at once, for he has had a terrible attack of delirium. This is not the first one, but I feared it would be the last, for his sufferings were fearful to witness.

"He insists that he will return to England as soon as he is strong enough to make the voyage, and I think there will be little danger in his doing so, for he is so greatly changed that no one could possibly recognize the handsome Leon Ashley in the bloated and gray-haired man who calls himself your nephew.

"Oh, dear sir, if you would only consent that he shall return to his native land, his *incognito* could be faithfully preserved, and we should all be happier and better off!

"Poor Leon also yearns for a sight of the daughter he has not seen since her infancy, and I think it will be cruel to deny him permission to return to England before he dies.

"I am sure that he cannot live very long, and I dread the thought of his dying in a foreign land, leaving me helpless and destitute of means, for the money we draw from you is all due before it reaches us.

"Evelyn is a good and dutiful girl, and her father seems to think more of her since his last illness than he has since the birth of his son, and your refusal to make Maitland an equal heir with his cousin. You know best—but I think it was a hard decision.

"This is a rambling letter, but you must excuse me as it has been written at intervals while my husband slept.—Your affectionate but deeply tried

"AUGUSTA."

There was a postscript added three days later in a scarcely legible hand, which ran thus:

"Leon is worse, I scarcely think he will live through the night and I am here with two children dependent upon me, without five pounds in the world, and all the expenses of my husband's illness to pay. Pray send some one to my assistance, for I have no friend on whom I can call, and I am utterly unused to business,

AUGUSTA."

Mrs. Ashley hesitated before reading the last lines, but the squire insisted.

"There is something more—read all—let me know the worst."

She obeyed him, and he covered his face with his clasped hands and sat so long motionless that she became alarmed and laid her hand upon his shoulder to arouse him from the painful reverie into which he had fallen.

When he lifted his face she was struck with the change that had passed over it, it looked drawn and unearthly, and she apprehensively said:

"This distracting news has proved too much for you. But surely you have been prepared for it by what we have heard before. For years you have known that the supposed Leon Larne was leading a very fast life in most dissipated and reckless company, and to break down in the heyday of existence is the natural result of such a course."

With difficulty did Mrs. Ashley tone her voice to the requisite degree of sympathy, for in her heart was the exulting belief that by this time the man she so deeply dreaded was no more, that he was removed before the disease of his father placed power in his vicious hands which she felt sure he would abuse.

The squire mournfully replied:

"I have long feared that such must be the end of Leon's ignoble career, but the pang is not less keen because it has been anticipated. I have unconsciously cherished the hope that he would in time repent of his evil course and make an effort to redeem himself. But now all is at an end, and the son for whom I once hoped so much has probably died the death of the drunken prodigal. It is a bitter grief and humilia-

tion to me, and I feel that his wretched fate will rend from me the remnant of life that might yet have been mine."

His pale sunken features and failing voice alarmed Mrs. Ashley, and she rang and ordered wine to be brought in. The stimulant revived his strength, but he complained of feeling weary, and no time was lost in removing him to his bed.

When the servants had retired and left them together, again Squire Ashley renewed the conversation his faintness had interrupted.

She was sitting beside the bed holding his hand in her own, when he suddenly unclosed his eyes, and turning towards her, said:

"Daisy, I have already determined on what is necessary to be done in this sad crisis of poor Leon's affairs. If he dies, that helpless fine lady he preferred to Grace must not be left there with my two grandchildren, with no friend to turn to and no means of living.

"I could send money in the usual way, but it would be longer in reaching Augusta than if an agent from me sought her out without delay. Even if she were to receive it promptly, I do not think she has judgment to use it rightly. If Leon yet survives, he has by this time partially regained his health, and he will, of course, return to his old courses; in the indulgence of the absorbing passion that has consumed his resources, he will throw away such sums as I may send him, and his wife and children will obtain little benefit from my liberality. My son must not return to this country, but his desire to behold his daughter can be gratified in another way."

He paused, earnestly regarding her bowed face, and Mrs. Ashley faintly asked:

"What then, do you propose to do? Would you consent to part from Bessie, merely to gratify a parent who has hitherto shown the greatest indifference toward her? One who merely makes this newborn desire to see his child an excuse for returning to England? Besides, Bessie is not aware that such a being as your son is still in existence. She has been taught to believe that her father died when she was an infant."

"Margaret, I am sorry that you view my plan with dissatisfaction, for it must be carried out. It is well that we arranged that the marriage of Frank and Bessie shall take place to-morrow, for by the night train they must set out on a bridal tour to France; Frank can carry such assistance as she may need to the poor woman who wrote that letter, for even if Leon yet lives, what I send shall be for her use, and that of the young creatures my reckless son keeps in poverty. I do not think he will die, and Bessie will have an opportunity of seeing her father; we will leave it to him to reveal their relationship, if he should see fit to do so. I cannot rest till I have sent some one to look after Augusta and the children, and Frank is the only person I dare trust with the secret of poor Leon."

After a pause, Mrs. Ashley replied:

"It seems necessary for Frank to be your agent, but will it not be best to have the ceremony of marriage performed on the day of his departure, thus making sure of their union, and then send him on his errand unaccompanied by Bessie? She seems reluctant to marry just now, and this will be a fair compromise. In the months that Frank must be absent from her, she will make up her mind to receive him on his return with the tenderness of a true wife."

"But that will scarcely be treating either her husband or her father with fairness," objected the squire, "and I own to you that I wish my son, if still in life, to see what a charming young creature his daughter is. Can you not consent to give up your darling a few months, Daisy, that she may visit him who has the strongest earthly claim upon her?"

Mrs. Ashley crushed down her extreme repugnance to the thought of placing Bessie in contact with a man whom she so deeply dreaded and despised as she did Leon Ashley, for she saw that her husband's heart was set upon it, and she knew that she could bring forward no reason that would be satisfactory to him for her opposition to his plan.

In a resigned voice she said:

"Perhaps I am selfish in my affection for the dear child, and I own that I am jealous that even her own father shall step between Bessie and those who have had the care of her from her infancy. He has done nothing for her, and we everything, and we have the best right to the first place in her affections. But if it is your will that she shall go on this journey with Frank, I will say nothing more to oppose you."

"Thank you, my good wife; I knew that you would be reasonable as soon as you understood the necessity that rules me. It is right for Bessie to go, and therefore I must insist that it shall be so. I will release you now, that you may go to the dear child, and inform her of the journey that is before her. The prospect may reconcile her to her hurried nuptials."

whom. There are often found vast chambers cut in solid rock, that have more the seeming of subterranean palaces than anything else. And my bearded Jew, Sadoc, burrows in one of these, so ingeniously contrived, that both air and light are freely admitted."

"You spoke also of a daughter?"

"I did, most valourous; and you may go far before you will find such another bit of Israelitish beauty. But as my taste runs, I am as well satisfied with Nicolette, her handmaiden," replied Ahab, with extreme complacency.

"I think I see what turns the weather-vane," said Sir Raoul, smiling. "You made good use of your time, doubtless, when you had access to this Nicolette."

"I can't deny but I practised my best graces, and showed my wit to the best advantage; and I flatter myself that when I undertake to be agreeable, nobody in the world can come within a mile of me. Knowing that I shall win or lose, I give myself no uneasiness about the result, certain that I shall die at just the same identical moment in either case. No daisies, though ever so pretty, ever kept a man from dying. Woman can produce heartaches, and manifold other diseases, but I'll be blamed if she can cure the simplest complaint, except hunger."

"How far is it to the stone palace of Sadoc?"

"I cannot tell. I think we might reach it in three hours, with moderate travelling."

Sir Raoul had too much good sense to press his company much upon Leoline.

Sometimes he rode in advance, close to their guide, Ahab, at others dropped behind; but never, unless addressed by Boabdil, placed himself near the princess; and when he ventured to do so, exercised such judgment and delicacy, that she could not help being flattered by his discretion.

In this way he imperceptibly gained an advantage over her, a woman always being ready to grant those little attentions which cost her no effort, yet give much pleasure, providing they are not abused and misconstrued by masculine vanity. In short, the Knight of the Red Cross was making good progress in the esteem of Leoline, though not perhaps sensible of the fact.

They continued their flight without further interruption until two hours after sunrise, when they entered a very mountainous and rocky region, where they curved and wound about strangely through passes and defiles.

They came, at length, to a narrow yet verdant ravine, through which trickled musically a small stream of water, a thousand wild flowers drawing nourishment from its moisture, giving it perfume in return. Crossing this, a mountain of rock defied their further progress.

"We have finished our journey," said Ahab. "We have arrived at the stone palace of Sadoc, the Jew."

"I see no palace of any kind!" growled Ali.

"Nor would one of your dullness ever discover it," replied Ahab. "Horseflesh, my masters, can go no further."

Ahab the Witty sprang to the ground and passed between the large rocks, separated just enough to allow a convenient passage, and then ran up what appeared to be natural steps in the nearly perpendicular side of the mountain. He leaped nimbly from step to step like a goat.

This proceeding was watched with interest by those who had trusted to his fidelity, and whose safety depended so much upon the event.

Ahab stood presently on a small shelf, which seemed to owe nothing to the art of man for its peculiar shape.

Picking up a small stone, he struck several distinct blows on the rock, which on that side formed nearly the entire face of the mountain. The utmost silence followed this knocking. Old Ali muttered, and Boabdil showed signs of impatience. Nothing discouraged, Ahab let fly his blows again with increased vigour.

"Let him thump!" said Ali, "and that is all the good it'll do. Perhaps he expects the mountain to open, and an enchanted palace to appear!"

This sneer had scarcely died on the grumbler's lips when a voice responded from the interior of the rock, with a peculiarly muffled and hollow sound.

"Who disturbs me," it said, "at my morning prayers?"

"It is a friend that knocks," answered Ahab.

"Who taught you the signal?"

"One of your own household, worthy Sadoc. Remember you not my voice?"

"I know nobody's voice. Go away, whoever you are, and vex not one who has renounced the world and all its vanities," replied Sadoc, in a querulous tone.

"Not so, pious Israelite. You have with you a daughter and a maiden; and daughters and maidens are the greatest vanities in the world. I am Ahab, the youth who chanced once to do you a friendly turn, and discovered also your retreat."

"Are you alone?" asked Sadoc, cautiously.

"I cannot say that I am; but I am so near alone that there are but six with me, all told."

"What does the young heathen say? Do my ears deceive me? Begone, you whelp of idolatry! I have no entertainment for sojourners within my narrow cell."

"We'll see about that!" retorted Ahab. "I have a bag of a certain black powder with me, which, if crammed into the crevices of thy door, and set on fire, will blow you smack into the bosom of Abraham."

"God of my fathers!" groaned Sadoc. "When will our persecutions cease?"

"When you open the door," answered Ahab, practically. "But lest you should not, I will begin stuffing in the same black powder I mentioned."

"Of what degree are those with you?"

"Of any or all degrees, just as it may best suit you. But I can tell you that they are many degrees impatient at your delay. Also, that there is a lady among them more beautiful than your daughter Salome, who stands much in need of rest and refreshment."

"I am afraid, importunate stripling, to admit strangers within my gates. It is a time of persecution and distress among my people. We know not how to distinguish friend from foe. Our confidence is often abused, and our faith tampered with. Our slow and painful accumulations are unjustly wrested from us, and we have no city nor abiding-place on the earth."

"All of which," answered Ahab, "has nothing to do with the subject. I swear by the Prophet that you shall not be harmed by those I bring. They are as hunted and miserable as ever was a descendant of Israel. They want neither your gold, nor your daughter, nor your life, nor your faith. They will bring a blessing and not a curse."

"Stop one moment, young heathen, while I look at them. I would see in what array they come."

"Let your observations be short, or the rocks will soon be tumbling about your head."

"I see," said Sadoc, and his voice came from a greater distance than before, "two cavaliers in full armour, with dreadful spears in their hands, and swords girt at their loins, bestriding mighty beasts of war. My heart misgives me, young Ahab! I am betrayed into the hands of men of blood, that do battle with carnal weapons."

At this stage of affairs, Sir Raoul, losing all patience, cried out:

"In the name of the Holy Patriarcha, old man, cast aside your cowardly fears, and give shelter, if in your power, to a fair lady in distress. Refuse a request so reasonable, and I swear by those Books of the Law which you profess to revere, to enter your rocky fortress by force!"

"The will of heaven be done!" muttered Sadoc, and presently he was seen standing beside Ahab.

(To be continued.)

## EVA ASHLEY.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

#### A SUDDEN BETROTHAL.

"WHAT do you say to grandpa's proposal, Bessie?" he mechanically asked; and he stretched forth his arm, fearing that she might faint, and fall without support.

But Bessie rallied quickly, and with more spirit than either of the listeners expected, she replied:

"I am sorry to thwart grandpa, but our marriage cannot yet take place. We are both too young and inexperienced to assume the serious duties of life. I have always been told that we were to be married some day, but there is no need of being in a hurry. We can pledge ourselves to grandpa, that even if he is removed from us we will consider his wishes as sacred, and at some future day fulfil the contract we can form now for his satisfaction."

"Bless the child! how glibly she talks, and how sensibly, too," said the squire. "If I believed that you would only adhere to the contract, Bessie, it would answer my purpose just as well; but how am I to feel assured that neither you nor Frank may prove inconstant?"

"Ay," broke in the persuasive voice of Mrs. Ashley, "that is the vital point at issue. Better far will it be for you to remove temptation from your hearts, by vowing them to each other without further delay. It is the strongest wish of my heart to see you and Frank united, Bessie, as it is that of your grandfather. I know that you are suited to each other, and happiness must crown your union."

"But we are first cousins, Minny; and to tell you the truth, I don't care about marrying one so nearly related to me. Frank seems almost like my brother," pouted Bessie.

"Pooh! cousins marry every day, and so far as I

know, they are as happy and prosperous as those that are not related. Bessie, have you no respect for Squire Ashley's wishes and mine? I scarcely expected this opposition from you."

In spite of this rebuke, Bessie persisted:

"I can't see why you and grandpa insist that Frank and I shall be married, when we neither of us wish it for several years to come. There is plenty for us both, and I had rather give Frank the whole estate than give him my hand, before I understand my own heart sufficiently to know whether he is the man I ought to marry."

Mrs. Ashley was about to reply, but Frank broke in:

"Why Bessy, you little casmist, why should you doubt that? I am a right proper fellow, and I mean to make you the best of husbands. If I don't profess to adore you, and all that, I love you just as dearly as I can; as to the money, I don't see how that is concerned in it; the law will divide it between us, I suppose, after giving Minny her third. But I hope grandpa will live many years yet to enjoy his own."

"Thank you, lad, but my course is almost run. Has it never occurred to you, Frank, that I may make a will, and make obedience to its provisions on the part of yourself and Bessie imperative upon you, if you would hereafter enjoy my wealth?"

Wentworth looked surprised, and presently said:

"I had no idea, sir, that you would think it necessary to compel Bessie and myself to choose each other. We are well enough disposed to obey your wishes, if you will give us time to make our own arrangements."

"I hoped that no compulsion would be necessary. I certainly do most ardently desire to see you and Bessie united; and I have neglected nothing which can insure the fulfilment of my wishes. You seem well enough disposed to gratify me, Frank, but I am sorry to see in Bessie a rebellious spirit, which will not contribute to her future happiness."

His pained tone struck upon the sensitive heart of Bessie, and in a moment she was kneeling beside him, holding his hand in hers, and, with quick penitence she said:

"My dear, dear grandpa, I am quick of temper and free of speech, but I will no longer oppose you. If your heart is set on this thing, I will not thwart you. I am but a silly child, but if Frank is willing to take me as I am, I will not refuse to obey you. We might have waited till we were older and wiser, but if you command me to do so, I will give him my hand at once, and try and make him a good wife."

Squire Ashley passed his hand caressingly over her bowed head, and said:

"That is right, and you are my own good child again. Come, Frank—name the day on which you will take this submissive little martyr for better, for worse."

"The sooner the better," was the ready response.

"Since we are to be executed, let it be without delay. Don't look so solemn, Bessie; it will only be like taking a cold douche, and when it's over, we shall both feel the better for it. I know that I shall be as happy as a king—ought to be; and I promise to treat you *en prince*. There, darling, don't let me see tears in your lovely eyes, because they are giving you to me for my wife."

Dimples broke over the chaming mouth of the young girl, and she dashed away her tears as she placed her hand in that of Wentworth, and said:

"You are a dear good boy, Frank, and I hope that I can love you as—as I ought. But you must give me time—you know we cannot school the heart all at once. Besides, it is so humdrum to marry somebody I have known all my life, with no romance, no difficulty about it."

Frank raised her hand to his lips, and laughingly replied:

"Oh! oh! little sentimental, that is where the shoe pinches, is it? We can get up some difficulties after we are married, you know. I have read some nice stories about ladies married without their full consent learning to love their husbands all the better after they were united for not caring a pin for them beforehand. We will follow in their footsteps, Bessie, and I will prove such a fascinating fellow that you will never be able to resist me. So that objection is settled, I hope."

The listeners could only laugh at this nonsense, and Mrs. Ashley said:

"I may congratulate you then, my dears, on the event which is soon to come on. Since you are both agreed as to the expediency of a speedy union, I will name the day. Let it be to-morrow."

"So soon!" exclaimed Bessie, in dismay. "Oh, Minny, I shall have no time to get ready."

"Nonsense, child, you have everything you can need, even if you are married at once. You are not going on a bridal tour, and I flatter myself that your wardrobe is always sufficiently supplied for such a change as you meditate."



Bessie would still have demurred, but Frank spoke with a tender joyfulness in his tones that contradicted the lightness of his words.

"Come, little wife, since you must be a victim, submit to the sacrifice gracefully, and gain some credit for making it."

Bessie became very pale, but she quietly replied:

"Since there is no escape from the destiny that has been awarded us, we may as well consent to fulfil it at once. I am afraid that you will have the worst part of the bargain, Frank, for I am not naturally of a very submissive temper, and I may prove anything but a suitable wife for you."

"I am willing to risk it," was the confident reply; and Squire Ashley heartily said:

"Then it is settled, and to-morrow afternoon the parson can come over and marry you as quietly as Daisy and I were united."

Bessie kissed him, and whispered:

"Let me go to my room now, grandpa, to think over all this. It seems so strange, and I am in such a flutter, that I must have time to compose my spirits before I can realize that I have actually promised my hand to Frank to-morrow."

"Go, then, my pretty one, and think only of how happy you are going to be with so gallant and handsome a husband."

She eluded the attempt of the young man to take her hand, and slipped from the apartment, which he also immediately left.

Well satisfied with the last hour's work, Mrs. Ashley sat stroking the wrinkled hand of her husband and talking to him in a low tone, till he fell asleep again, and slumbered on till twilight gathered around them.

The labour of so many years was nearly accomplished, she believed, and in a few hours Bessie would be safe.

As the wife of the heir, she was sure of her daughter's future position as mistress of Ashurst, and her scheming mind felt the gratifying assurance that the great object of her life was on the eve of attainment.

The lamp was lighted, and the tea brought in. Mrs. Ashley aroused herself from her reverie in time to pour out the steaming liquid, and put into the squire's cup the exact quantity of cream and sugar he liked.

He smiled on her as he quaffed it.

"Hebe never served more delicious nectar to the gods than this, and I have my doubts whether she was half as charming as my handmaiden."

She laughed merrily and replied:

"You are a dear old flatterer, but I am not vain enough to credit half the pretty things you say of me."

His reply was interrupted by the appearance at the door of the lad whose business it was to visit the neighbouring post-office and bring back the mail.

He carried a small bag in his hand which seemed quite full, and the squire set down his cup as he said:

"I do hope there is a letter from France. It is so long, so long since I heard, that I am uneasy. Pray examine the mail as quickly as you can, my dear, and if you find a foreign letter read it to me before looking further."

Mrs. Ashley unlocked the bag and poured its contents on the table.

The most of them proved to be newspapers and magazines, but at the very bottom was found a letter from Mrs. Leon Ashley.

She broke the seal, glanced down the page, slightly changed colour, and prepared to read at the command of her husband, though she greatly feared the effect of the tidings it contained.

"Vienna, May 5, 18—.

"DEAR UNCLE,—I write to you without the knowledge of my poor Leon, who is confined to his bed with an illness from which I sadly fear he will never recover.

"The climate of this place does not agree with him, and of late years his habits have been such that his constitution is prematurely broken down. I do not wish to complain of my husband, and I have hitherto borne with everything in silence, because I married him for love, and meant what I said when I took him 'for better or for worse.'

"But endurance, even on the part of a devoted wife, has its limits, and mine has at length failed me. Of late, Leon has given himself up to gambling and drinking to such excess as would terrify you if you were near him and could witness his mad acts.

"Even with our large income, he has long kept me on the most limited allowance, and his failure to pay all his gambling debts drove him from Paris to this place.

"I hoped the change would restore him to his senses, but he finds here plenty who have the same passion for dissipation which is destroying him, and our pecuniary condition is no better than when we came hither.

"I have taken advantage of Leon's illness to tell you the exact truth about our circumstances, in the hope that you can do something to produce a change for the better.

"We are living in lodgings in this city, which are positively shabby for people of respectable condition. We have but two servants, one of whom is Evelyn's nurse, who will not consent to leave her. My son has been brought from England and placed at school here, and he is making great progress in his studies; he is a tall boy now, and a very handsome one, I must say, though strangers do say that he greatly resembles me.

"Evelyn has been removed from her fashionable Parisian school, because her father found that he could no longer afford to keep her there. She is quite a young lady now, and should be introduced into society, but Leon will not listen to such a thing, and seems anxious to keep her entirely to himself. I have no voice in the matter, for I have lost all influence over my husband, and the language he often uses to me is dreadful.

"He now lies before me in a heavy slumber, looking as ghastly as if dead. The stimulants that are destroying him I am compelled to give him in small quantities to prevent him from sinking at once, for he has had a terrible attack of delirium. This is not the first one, but I feared it would be the last, for his sufferings were fearful to witness.

"He insists that he will return to England as soon as he is strong enough to make the voyage, and I think there will be little danger in his doing so, for he is so greatly changed that no one could possibly recognize the handsome Leon Ashley in the bloated and grey-haired man who calls himself your nephew.

"Oh! dear sir, if you would only consent that he shall return to his native land, his *incurable* could be faithfully preserved, and we should all be happier and better off."

"Poor Leon also yearns for a sight of the daughter he has not seen since her infancy, and I think it will be cruel to deny him permission to return to England before he dies.

"I am sure that he cannot live very long, and I dread the thought of his dying in a foreign land, leaving me helpless and destitute of means, for the money we draw from you is all due before it reaches us.

"Evelyn is a good and dutiful girl, and her father seems to think more of her since his last illness than he has since the birth of his son, and your refusal to make Maitland an equal heir with his cousin. You know best—but I think it was a hard decision.

"This is a rambling letter, but you must excuse me as it has been written at intervals while my husband slept.—Your affectionate but deeply tried

"AUGUSTA."

There was a postscript added three days later in a scarcely legible hand, which ran thus:

"Leon is worse, I scarcely think he will live through the night and I am here with two children dependent upon me, without five pounds in the world, and all the expenses of my husband's illness to pay. Pray send some one to my assistance, for I have no friend on whom I can call, and I am utterly unused to business. AUGUSTA."

Mrs. Ashley hesitated before reading the last lines, but the squire insisted.

"There is something more—read all—let me know the worst."

She obeyed him, and he covered his face with his clasped hands and sat so long motionless that she became alarmed and laid her hand upon his shoulder to arouse him from the painful reverie into which he had fallen.

When he lifted his face she was struck with the change that had passed over it. It looked drawn and unearthly, and she apprehensively said:

"This distracting news has proved too much for you. But surely you have been prepared for it by what we have heard before. For years you have known that the supposed Leon Larne was leading a very fast life in most dissipated and reckless company, and to break down in the heyday of existence is the natural result of such a course."

With difficulty did Mrs. Ashley tone her voice to the requisite degree of sympathy, for in her heart was the exulting belief that by this time the man she so deeply dreaded was no more, that he was removed before the disease of his father placed power in his vicious hands which she felt sure he would abuse.

The squire mournfully replied:

"I have long feared that such must be the end of Leon's ignoble career, but the pang is not less keen because it has been anticipated. I have unconsciously cherished the hope that he would in time repent of his evil course and make an effort to redeem himself. But now all is at an end, and the son for whom I once hoped so much has probably died the death of the drunken profligate. It is a bitter grief and humilia-

tion to me, and I feel that his wretched fate will read from me the remnant of life that might yet have been mine."

His pale sunken features and falling voice alarmed Mrs. Ashley, and she rang and ordered wine to be brought in. The stimulant revived his strength, but he complained of feeling weary, and no time was lost in removing him to his bed.

When the servants had retired and left them together, again Squire Ashley renewed the conversation his faintness had interrupted.

She was sitting beside the bed holding his hand in her own, when he suddenly unclosed his eyes, and turning towards her, said:

"Daisy, I have already determined on what is necessary to be done in this sad crisis of poor Leon's affairs. If he dies, that helpless fine lady he preferred to Grace must not be left there with my two grandchildren, with no friend to turn to and no means of living."

"I could send money in the usual way, but it would be longer in reaching Augusta than if an agent from me sought her out without delay. Even if she were to receive it promptly, I do not think she has judgment to use it rightly. If Leon yet survives, he has by this time partially regained his health, and he will, of course, return to his old courses; in the indulgence of the absorbing passion that has consumed his resources, he will throw away such sums as I may send him, and his wife and children will obtain little benefit from my liberality. My son must not return to this country, but his desire to behold his daughter can be gratified in another way."

He paused, earnestly regarding her bowed face, and Mrs. Ashley faintly asked:

"What then, do you propose to do? Would you consent to part from Bessie, merely to gratify a parent who has hitherto shown the greatest indifference toward her? One who merely makes this newborn desire to see his child an excuse for returning to England? Besides, Bessie is not aware that such a being as your son is still in existence. She has been taught to believe that her father died when she was an infant."

"Margaret, I am sorry that you view my plan with dissatisfaction, for it must be carried out. It is well that we arranged that the marriage of Frank and Bessie shall take place to-morrow, for by the night train they must set out on a bridal tour to France. Frank can carry such assistance as she may need to the poor woman who wrote that letter, for even if Leon yet lives, what I send shall be for her use, and that of the young creatures my reckless son keeps in poverty. I do not think he will die, and Bessie will have an opportunity of seeing her father; we will leave it to him to reveal their relationship, if he should see fit to do so. I cannot rest till I have sent some one to look after Augusta and the children, and Frank is the only person I dare trust with the secret of poor Leon."

After a pause, Mrs. Ashley replied:

"It seems necessary for Frank to be your agent, but will it not be best to have the ceremony of marriage performed on the day of his departure, thus making sure of their union, and then send him on his errand unaccompanied by Bessie? She seems reluctant to marry just now, and this will be a fair compromise. In the months that Frank must be absent from her, she will make up her mind to receive him on his return with the tenderness of a true wife."

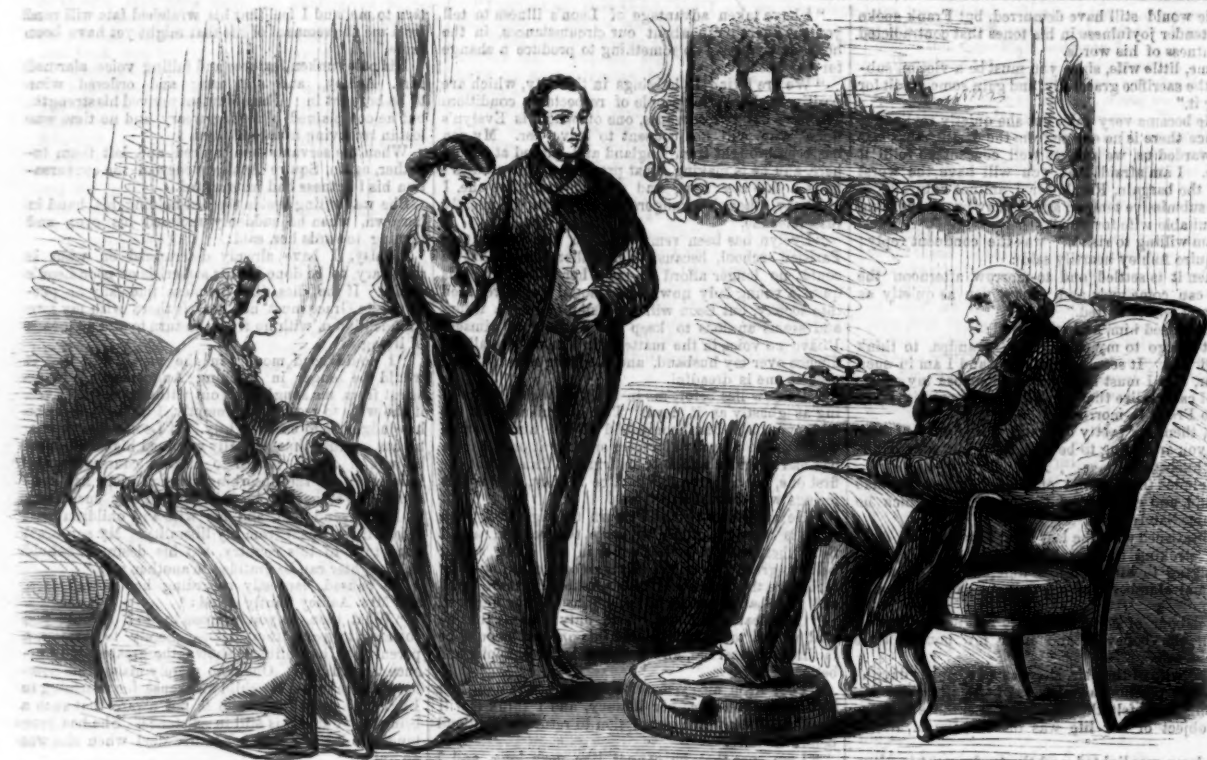
"But that will scarcely be treating either her husband or her father with fairness," objected the squire, "and I own to you that I wish my son, if still in life, to see what a charming young creature his daughter is. Can you not consent to give up your darling a few months, Daisy, that she may visit him who has the strongest earthly claim upon her?"

Mrs. Ashley crushed down her extreme repugnance to the thought of placing Bessie in contact with a man whom she so deeply dreaded and despised as she did Leon Ashley, for she saw that her husband's heart was set upon it, and she knew that she could bring forward no reason that would be satisfactory to him for her opposition to his plan.

In a resigned voice she said:

"Perhaps I am selfish in my affection for the dear child, and I own that I am jealous that even her own father shall stop between Bessie and those who have had the care of her from her infancy. He has done nothing for her, and we everything, and we have the best right to the first place in her affections. But if it is your will that she shall go on this journey with Frank, I will say nothing more to oppose you."

"Thank you, my good wife; I knew that you would be reasonable as soon as you understood the necessity that rules me. It is right for Bessie to go, and therefore I must insist that it shall be so. I will release you now, that you may go to the dear child, and inform her of the journey that is before her. The prospect may reconcile her to her hurried nuptials."



## [SQUIRE ASHLEY'S PROPOSAL.]

Send Frank to me; I wish to talk to him. I must confide to him the secret which has been so long kept, and prepare him for the duty he will have to perform."

"Had you not better wait till morning? You are not strong enough to bear so much excitement."

"I cannot rest till this is off my mind—so the lad had better come as soon as possible. The wine I drank has given me fictitious strength, which will sustain me through the interview, and when it is over perhaps I shall be able to repose peacefully."

"Then I will send Frank at once."

She arose, arranged his pillows more comfortably, and left the room.

In a few moments young Wentworth entered, apparently much surprised at this unusual summons. As he took the vacant chair, he said:

"Your message came at the nick of time, sir, for I was just on the eve of taking wing for Mr. Welby's. Bessie refused to leave her room when tea was ready, you and Minny had yours in the library, and I felt myself so completely deserted that I was about to depart for the night in search of some companionship."

The listener smiled faintly.

"I supposed that you and Bessie be glad to be left tête-à-tête, and I had no idea that the little gipsy would run away from you the very day she had promised to marry you."

Frank had nothing to say in reply, and his grandfather paused so long after uttering these words that he began to fidget, and wonder what on earth he could have to say to him at that hour of night.

At length Squire Ashley said:

"I see that you are becoming impatient, but if you could divine the painful nature of the revelation I am compelled to make to you, you would feel little surprised at my hesitation."

The young man was instantly quiet and attentive. He said:

"Pardon me, sir, I never can keep still long, but I hope I do not disturb you."

"Not much, lad; but it is useless to defer what must be said. Frank, I have implicit faith in your honour, and I believe that a secret confided to you will be held inviolate."

Wentworth's eyes widened, but he promptly said: "Assuredly, sir, my word is as sacred as an oath would be to many persons. Besides, young and giddy as I am, I never betray confidence that is reposed in me."

With some bitterness, the squire replied:

"You will be sure to keep this one, Frank, for

family honour is too deeply concerned in it to permit you to reveal to any other being what I am about to confide to you."

Frank's interest was now vividly excited, and he bent his head to listen to the tremulous tones of his grandfather's voice, as he immediately commenced the promised revelation.

To his intense astonishment, he learned that the uncle he believed lying in the graveyard was still living in Europe, under a feigned name, and the outlines of his disgraceful story were rapidly sketched for him.

The necessity that he should visit Vienna immediately, that he might carry assistance to the wife and children of Leon Ashley, was made known to him. Whether he were living or dead, they would require protection from the selfish prodigality which impoverished them, and Frank alone could be the agent to carry assistance to them.

When Squire Ashley paused, exhausted by speaking so long, the young man earnestly said:

"This is a strange and sad history, sir, but you may rely on me to serve you to the utmost of my ability. I have long desired to visit the Continent, and although I could have wished to go on a less painful errand, I shall still find much enjoyment in the tour, especially with Bessie for my companion. Poor girl! she does not know that she is going to see her father; and if I could, I would always conceal from her that this unfortunate man stands in that relation to her."

Squire Ashley impressively replied:

"I wish you to understand that unless my son reveals himself to her in his true character, Bessie must remain in ignorance of the tie that exists between them. I shall leave Leon to decide on his course himself."

"That will be best, sir; and I only hope that my uncle will preserve his own secret from the knowledge of his daughter. Dear Bessie is too bright and young to have her life clouded by such a revelation as this would be to her."

"I think Leon will save himself the mortification of enlightening her. Now listen attentively to what I wish you to do, Frank. In my scribbles you will find a large sum of money, a portion of which was paid in lately by the steward of the Arden estates. I shall also give you an order on my banker in London for additional supplies. You will be married to-morrow afternoon, as has already been arranged, and take the night train for the metropolis. Your money must be converted into bills of exchange, and when you reach Vienna, seek out the helpless family

you are sent to succour, and do the best you can to relieve them from the pressure of debt. If my son is yet living, do not trust the money in his possession, for he would throw it into the same vortex which has swallowed up the large sums I have hitherto sent him, but use it for the benefit of his family?"

"You fully understand what I wish done, Frank?"

"Yes, sir, I think I do; and I promise to obey you as far as I possibly can. If—I find my uncle dead, what would you wish to be done with his family?"

"In that event they must return to this country with you. His daughter is the heiress to the Arden estates, and her stepmother and brother can live with her in the family mansion till I can make some more suitable arrangement for them."

Frank observed that the voice of the speaker sank away into a faint whisper, as if all his vital strength was exhausted, and he arose and said:

"I think I understand what you wish done, sir, and I pledge you my honour to fulfil your intentions to the very best of my ability. You are tired and worn out now, and it will be best to defer any further directions you may wish to give me till to-morrow."

"God bless you, Frank," said his grandfather, feebly grasping his hand. "You are a comfort and a pride to me now, though I so long and so persistently thrust you from my heart. Forgive my long neglect, lad, and the hardness of nature that suffered your poor mother to die in poverty."

It was the first time Squire Ashley had ever spoken to him of his mother, and the young man was deeply affected. He said:

"Dear grandpa, your kindness to me has obliterated the memory of all that. I owe so much to you that I should be an ungrateful wretch to think of wrongs which have been repented of, and, as far as possible, atoned."

"You are a noble fellow, Frank, and I hope that you and Bessie will be happy together. I sometimes fear that I have done wrong in making my will as I have, but it was intended for the best."

"I have no more doubt of that, sir, than I have that Bessie and I will be a model couple. I am quite satisfied with my lot, as I told her this afternoon, and her objections arise from shyness more than from any repugnance to our union. You shall see, sir, what a happy pair we will make."

The old man sighed, and faintly said: "I hope so, lad; and now leave me, for I feel utterly worn out."

Frank bade him good night, and quietly left the room.

(To be continued.)





[ARREST OF LIONEL RICHMOND.]

# THE FORESTER.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A JOURNEY.—CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

Oh! that the forest were my dwelling-place,  
With one fair spirit for my minister,  
That I might all forget the human race,  
And, hating no one, love but only her!

*Childe Harold.*

AFTER parting with Lady Valeria, Lionel Richmond kept on at a brisk pace till he reached a peasant's cottage, nestling down on the verge of a copse, which had in summer been shadowy with thick foliage, and haunted by wild birds. The dwelling was simple in the extreme, with brown walls and a thatched roof, but as the young man entered everything within bespoke neatness and thrift, from the sanded floor to the rafters overhead.

A woman, who was spinning in the chimney corner, sprang to her feet as he appeared, and dropped a low curtsy, exclaiming:

"What would you, my lord—shall I call James, or the boys to wait on you?"

"I would fain see your husband," replied Richmond; "I must have a moment's speech with him before I proceed."

The dame darted into the copse, and presently returned with a sturdy man, clad in peasant costume, and with the sleeves of his blouse rolled up from his brawny arms.

"Well, James Thurlow, here I am," said Richmond, "and now methinks I will change my pilgrim's garb for the garments I left with you."

The peasant reflected a few moments ere he replied: "If I might presume to offer advice, I would suggest that you keep your present garb. They tell me some courtier has told the king and Margaret of Anjou that the forester, who wore the Lancastrian livery in the Windsor woods, was a Yorkist spy, and you may yet be arrested as a traitor to the crown."

The young man's eyes flashed, and he drew himself haughtily up, muttering:

"God knows I do not like to go masked, but there are many reasons why life is dear to me—dearer than ever before, James Thurlow, and I will not rashly throw it away."

"Ay, that is right," continued the peasant; "I would not like to have you fall a victim to a Lancastrian's revenge, and I would counsel you to take all possible precaution."

A brief conference ensued, and Lionel Richmond left the cottage, habited as a pilgrim, "with scallop

shell and sandal shoon," and wearing a most devout air.

The old year was drawing to a close; the pomp of early autumn had disappeared, and the trees no longer glowed as if the hues of tropic forests had been transferred to England; golden grain no more lent its sheen to the broad fields, and the harvest moon had faded from the sky.

Even the moors had grown dun and dreary, for the "foxglove had lost its purple," the yellow gorse its bloom, and where wild berries had hung heavily from the shrubs, there were neither fruit nor leaves.

Bleak and dismal was the country through which Richmond journeyed, till on the last day, he perceived at a short distance the favourite seat of the Duke of York.

Across the grand old park he wound, recalling the memories of his boyhood, which came thronging upon him as he moved on, and hoping, like the devoted lover he was, that the hour would yet come when Lady Valeria would be there—his bride.

It was Christmas eve, and for a long time he loitered about the mansion, watching the butler through the window of the banquetting hall, as he stalked to and fro between long rows of plate, tall flasks of wine, and treasures of antique porcelain, like a general reviewing a regiment.

In the kitchen, too, he could see the face of the portly cook, and the numerous assistants employed on the occasion; and catch the savoury odours of the Christmas cheer provided for the coming holidays.

Suddenly a pleasant thought seemed to strike the young man's fancy, and he sauntered towards the great hall door, and after giving a loud rap, said:

"I will play the same game I did at Beaufort Castle, and see if I cannot delude them as I did Lady Valeria by changing my manner and mode of speech, and aided by this pilgrim's garb."

While he was speaking he heard footsteps in the hall, and a stately porter answered his summons. With him the ruse was successful, for he did not dream that he was standing face to face with a member of the family.

"Good porter," began the pilgrim, "it is late, and I have no money to procure a shelter from the December winds—"

"Hist," cried the porter, "the house is full of guests as usual at Christmas time, and we cannot keep you."

Strange as it may seem, the pilgrim stalked by the indignant Hugh and entered a drawing-room, where the ladies of the household were gathered with several guests.

"Pardon my boldness in thus intruding upon you," exclaimed the pilgrim, "but I am weary and footsore, and would fain seek a night's shelter beneath your roof."

The duchess, like the porter, was mystified by the disguise, but a young girl, who sat at a harp, broke into a laugh, which astonished and half-irritated the rest of the company.

"Ah," observed the pilgrim, "she must be quite heartless or she would have some sympathy for a wanderer like me, when your house is full of Christmas cheer, and there must be a morsel of food and a spare corner for one who has wandered many a league to day."

"Lionel Richmond," said a sweet voice, "you cannot delude me; I should know you through a thousand disguises like this."

And a beautiful, gipsyish creature danced toward him, and flung back his cowl, adding:

"Confess the truth—your disguise is skilful, but you could not mislead Bonibell Seymour! There, there! take heed, or I shall betray you to the Archbishop and have you publicly anathematized as an arrant impostor!"

"Lady Bonibell," repeated Richmond, "I cast myself on your mercy and confess the imposture."

"On one condition, I will forgive you."

"And what is it?"

"That you make a full recantation."

"I do not comprehend you, lady," interposed the young man.

"You stated that I must be quite heartless because I had no sympathy for a poor pilgrim—it was heresy, and you must retract it!"

"Ay, here in the presence of these witnesses, I take back the language I employed, concerning Lady Bonibell."

And he assumed an air of mock gravity, which aroused another peal of laughter from Bonibell's bright lips, and she murmured softly, as she extended her hand:

"I grant you a full and free pardon."

"Lionel, Lionel Richmond," said the duchess, "what does this mean? Was it to avoid peril, or in some wild freak, that you put on the pilgrim's garb?"

"Both, my lady; as only friends are supposed to be assembled here, I need not fear to speak frankly. I was advised for my own safety to travel here in disguise, and when I reached the mansion, the thought flashed upon me, that it would be a pleasant thing to play off a harmless ruse. I will now leave you for a time, and lay aside a vesture which scarcely befits such a scene as I found on entering."

With these words he bowed and retired, the duchess following him.

When they had gained the spacious chamber which was the pleasantest of the suite of rooms that had been appropriated to him, the duchess sank into a chair, and said:

"I will wait while you make your toilet, Lionel, and then we will have a moment's quiet talk before you go down."

The young man glided from the apartment, and soon returned and paused near the noble lady.

With his velvet tunic falling open in front to reveal a waistcoat of white silk damask, and a collar of the finest lace, his long, pointed shoes caught up with silver chains, his flowing hair of that rich hue you find on a ripe damson, his broad brow, clear dark eyes, and well-cut lips, he seemed as handsome and stately a cavalier as one would wish to see.

The duchess surveyed him with fond pride, observing:

"You look little like the pilgrim who was ushered into my presence half an hour ago." The young man smiled, and the lady went on: "I cannot tell you how welcome you are, my dear boy; if you were my own son, I could scarcely love you more tenderly; and I have had many fears concerning you since you left us on your mad-caper errand. But I cannot now stay to hear what has befallen you, and must take another day."

"Is my adopted father at Ludlow?" asked the young man.

"Yes, but he has gone to visit a man who fought under his command in his youth. The poor soldier has dragged himself hither, that he might die with a comrade who has been in our service."

"And who is he?"

"Roger Grant."

"And the soldier—have I ever seen him?"

"Nay I think not; he was exiled during the reign of Henry V. and has been an alien for ten years."

"I know where Grant's cottage is, though he is a new servant, and will go there to meet my father."

"Have you anything important to communicate? If not, I think the ladies will scarcely feel disposed to release such a favourite cavalier."

"I am the bearer of important tidings," rejoined Richmond.

"Good or evil?"

"They are favourable to our cause."

"Then I will not detain you—go, but hasten back."

As she spoke she swept from the room, and the young man descended the staircase, and passing through a postern-gate, went forth into the night.

The north wind blew keen, but the sky was clear and blue, and though there was no moon, the steadfast stars burned brightly in those boundless reaches of space.

Richmond had not gone far, when he met a man of stately presence. It was the Duke of York, the heir presumptive to the crown of England.

"Lionel, Lionel," cried the duke, "welcome, welcome home! I feared you would not reach us to-night, and Christmas without you would put us all in a most dismal humour."

"I have had a tedious journey, but no misadventure has befallen me; I donned a pilgrim's garb, and even the duchess did not recognize me till that elf of a Bonibell declared I was Lionel Richmond, and need not attempt to deceive her."

"The eyes of love are keen, my boy."

"I trust she does not love me save as a friend," replied the young man, "for I have no heart to give her should, hers be in my keeping. But a truce to this—my mother told me you had gone to visit a person lying ill in Roger Grant's cottage."

"Yes, lad," and the speaker's face grew solemn; "for him Christmas morning will break, and the Christmas chiming ring in heaven. After a life of storms of warfare, of bitter wrong, he had died in peace—there the weary heart finds rest."

As he spoke, the duke removed his hat, and stood with uncovered head, gazing into the serene sky above, where beyond the stars in the beautiful city, with streets of gold and gates of pearl, he trusted the alien had found repose.

Lionel Richmond followed his example, and for a time they stood thus, and then walked on in thoughtful silence.

Finally, however, the duke asked:

"Have you any tidings for me?"

"Yes."

And he placed a small packet in his hand.

"From whom comes the message, prithee?"

"From your trusty friend, Meredith."

"I will examine it when I am at leisure; and now tell me of yourself, Lionel. How fares it with the beautiful Lancastrian?"

"She has left the court, and is leading a quiet life with her invalid father."

"So I have heard, lad; but have you seen him?"

"Yes, habited as a pilgrim, I sought refuge from the storm at Beaufort Castle. I told the porter that Lady Valeria was famed for her hospitality, and she did not turn me from the door, but ushered me into a warm, cheerful room. She doubtless intended to leave me to the care of the servants and hasten back to her father; but I managed to arouse her interest, her sympathies, and heart spoke to heart. As one far inferior to her in rank, I won her love, and had the joy of receiving the assurance from her own lips. The next morning I made a full disclosure of my real name, the fact that I was your adopted son, and should give my influence to the White Rose of England. Do you approve my course?"

"It may not have been discreet, my boy, but it was honourable, and I do not know that you could have acted otherwise. But what is to be done?"

"We are to wait and hope, my father; mayhap Heaven will soften her father's heart toward the Yorkist and banish whatever Lancastrian prejudices she may retain in spite of her love for a White Rose Chief." He paused an instant, and resumed, "Not far from Beaufort Castle there lives a peasant, who is faithful to our cause, and when I stopped to change my pilgrim's vesture, he counselled me to take my journey hither in disguise."

"And why?" and the Duke of York cast a quick, eager glance at his adopted son.

"Because, forsooth, he had learned that the king had been apprised of the game I played upon him, when I assumed his livery in Windsor Forest, and I might be arrested as a spy."

"Ah! say you so, lad? I must look to it you are not exposed to Lancastrian revenge!"

They had now reached the postern-gate, and while the Duke of York hurried to read Meredith's message in private, Lionel returned to the drawing-room and became the life of the gay party. When he retired to his chamber, a lad who acted as valet and page to the young man, and been his attendant during his sojourn in Windsor Forest, came forward to offer his assistance. It was the same boy who had shrunk in apparent timidity from Valeria Lyndhurst when he had brought the horses which were to bear her along the forest paths and over the pleasant road leading to the castle.

"Are you glad to see me back?" asked Richmond.

"Oh, yes, sir; and I am not the only person whose heart bounds at the sight of you."

"What mean you, boy?"

"I was peering into the drawing-room when you arrived, and a lady there, the most beautiful in the world, I fancy, blushed, and smiled, and trembled too, at your coming."

"Who could it be? I am all curiosity."

"Ah, you know as well as I—pretty Bonibell Seymour."

"And you call her the most beautiful lady in the world?"

"Ay, can you deny it?"

As he spoke, two visions rose before the young man—Bonibell and Valeria.

Both were young, both were lovely, but Bonibell was petite in form, with a restless, little head, a profusion of jetty hair, a pair of dusky eyes, and a cheek which reminded you of the crimson side of a ripe pear, the glow blended so richly with the clear, amber brown of her complexion.

Valeria Lyndhurst, on the contrary, had a graceful stateliness of form, a fair face, a wealth of tresses "brown in the shadow and gold in the sun," the tint of the peach blossom on her cheek, and the most changeable lips and eyes in the universe.

"What say you?" continued the page.

"That to me Lady Valeria Lyndhurst is a thousand-fold fairer!"

"Tush!" And the boy's foot beat impatiently against the floor. "Old friends are better than new!"

"What! have you not yet given up your prejudices towards Lady Valeria?"

"Nay, she is a Lancastrian, and I detest them, root and branch."

"And yet I love her with my whole soul!"

"I am sorry for it!" exclaimed the boy. "I would far rather have Lady Bonibell for my future mistress—she is fit to be the wife of a White Rose Chief."

"Never, never speak to me again in such a strain, lad. Valeria is dearer to me than my own life."

"Forgive me, my master. I am sorry if I have offended you, but I have been humoured and spoiled, the other pages say, by your great kindness."

The young man laid his hand kindly on the boy's head, and replied:

"I shall lay up naught against you; I have always treated you with more consideration because you are an orphan like myself. Go, go."

"You are not angry with me, that you wish to be alone?"

"Nay, child."

The page bowed, and lifted his master's hand to his lips with a sudden gush of boyish affection; but as he disappeared, he muttered:

"No good will come of falling in love with a Lancastrian lady."

Christmas morn dawned, bright and beautiful, and Lionel Richmond was awakened from the profound slumber, which had succeeded his wearisome journey, by sweet voices chanting beneath his window, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

He sprang from his couch, and glancing down, saw the child-singers below, their young heads garlanded with holly, and their upturned faces radiant with youth and hope.

"A merry Christmas to you!" he exclaimed, flinging open the window, and showering a handful of crowns at their feet ere they moved onward.

Making a hasty toilet, he descended the staircase, and found the dining-hall pervaded by the cheerful warmth of the yule log, which was all a-blaze on the hearthstone; the walls gay with garlands, and the wassail-bowl ready for the splay draught, which was a peculiarity of Christmas in the old times.

Through the open door he could catch glimpses of the busy cook, and the good cheer which seemed to occupy every thought, and now and then Bonibell's dusky face was reflected in the steel mirrors, as a lake reflects the bright-wing of some passing bird. The dinner was a marvel of the *cuisinier's* skill, and when the wassail had been quaffed, Lionel Richmond set out to escort some of the elderly ladies to their home, a league perhaps distant.

He had left them, and was returning to the mansion he had just left, when on a lonely road he found himself surrounded by a band of men-at-arms, closing about him like a phalanx of iron.

"Who dares molest a gentleman thus?" he cried sharply, drawing the small dagger worn by cavaliers in full dress.

"I—and I have the royal authority," was the curt reply; "you are arrested as a spy, a traitor to the crown, and a partisan of the White Rose. Come."

And an officer, whom Richmond at once recognized as a Lancastrian bailiff, rudely seized his arm.

The young man defended himself for a time, but was obliged to surrender, and with fettered hands and feet was borne away.

After a long dreary journey through the first storm of winter, he was conveyed to London, and thrown into the Tower.

Hours dragged by, and the duke and the duchess retired to rest, thinking the young man would soon return; but there were two who were wakeful and anxious, and these were Harold the page, and Lady Bonibell.

Stationed at her window, she strained her eyes through the shadows to catch a glimpse of the gallant Richmond, and would fain have stifled the quick throb of her heart to listen for the sound of his horse's hoof-beats on the paved avenue leading to the mansion, while the boy started in pursuit of his master.

On, on he flew, peering into the gloom, and calling his master's name till he was too hoarse to utter it.

He reached the place of Richmond's destination, and learned he left the ladies safe long before. Where, where, could he be now? What had befallen him?

Harold sank down faint and disheartened, and wept as a woman would in like circumstances; but he rose stronger for his momentary reflections.

"I will go on till I find some trace of him," he exclaimed; "if I am hungry I will beg my bread; if I am tired I will rest by the wayside."

Finally he gained a little town where he had often been with the duke's family, and stopped to listen to the talk of a group of loungers gathered on the steps of an old chapel.

"What's the news?" inquired another, who had just joined them.

"By St. George! strange things have happened hereabouts; a party of the king's men-at-arms passed through the village to-day, with a prisoner bound to the saddle of the foremost."

"Who was he?" and the lad leaned forward with breathless interest.

"Young Richmond, the adopted son of the Duke of York. It seems from the conversation I overheard, when they stopped to take a glass of ale at the Raynesford Arms, that he served as forester to the king in order to play the spy."

The boy's slight frame shook from head to foot, and involuntarily he muttered:

"A pest on the Lancastrians!"

The loungers, however, were too intent with their gossip to heed his words, with the exception of one, who sauntered to Harold, and exclaimed:

"So I say, my lad. There was not a finer young man in England than Lionel Richmond; he always had a pleasant word for the poor."

"Hush!" cried another; "keep a more cautious



tongue, for you may lose your head, Jack. The Lancastrians are in power, and we must submit."

"You are not to be called men if you act like cravens at such a time as this," said Harold; "I am Lionel Richmond's second page, and I am not afraid to have anybody know how my heart aches for him, or how I hate the House of Lancaster! He came home to spend Christmas, and when he went to escort some ladies who dined at the duke's, to Wellford Manor, the king's men-at-arms were on the watch for him, I suppose. When my master did not return I felt ill at ease and could not rest, and at last I started in pursuit of him. You have been the first to give me any clue to his fate, and I must nerve myself to bear back the heavy tidings."

There was something so sorrowfully majestic in his aspect that the idlers were touched, and he who had manifested Yorkist sympathies offered to share his last loaf with him, declaring he must be half-famished after his long walk.

The page shook his head, and replied:

"I shall not want it; I can eat nothing till they know all at Ludlow."

The stranger wrung the boy's hand, and thus they parted, the lad retracing his steps to the Duke of York's seat, and the other resuming his work at the anvil.

It was late in the afternoon when Harold reached the duke's mansion, and stole like a shadow through the hall and corridors, leading to the bower-room of the duchess. Softly parting the arras, he gazed for an instant on the scene within; the embers glowed brightly on the hearthstone, and the fire-light flickered over the stately figure of the duchess, and the nervous motion of the white fingers, which, with her troubled eyes, betrayed her anxiety as to Lionel Richmond's fate; the restless little Bonibell flitting to and fro, and the other lady guests, who were all in a most dismal mood. The next moment the page stood in their midst, exclaiming:

"Prepare yourselves for evil tidings, ladies."

"What, what has happened?"

"My dear master has been arrested!"

"For what crime, prithee?"

"He was charged with having served the king as a forger in Windsor Forest to carry out his own purposes and those of the House of York. As a spy, a traitor to the crown, he has been seized by the king's men-at-arms, and borne away to London."

"Heaven help him!" cried the duchess; "as he had reached us in safety, I hoped he might still elude their vigilance, but the poor lad is now at their mercy, and will doubtless soon be in the Tower."

"Yes, my lady, so the men at the Raynesford Arms told me."

The duchess shuddered, and the tears gathered in her eyes, and some of the guests wept also; but Bonibell sat white and rigid with the great sorrow that had fallen on her young heart.

"Call the duke," said the duchess, addressing Harold; "or rather tell him yourself, for I cannot!"

Ere long the tapestry which divided the lady's dressing-chamber from the bower-room was swept aside, and the Duke of York stalked in, pale and stern.

He had put on his suit of armour, and folded a loose cloak over it to conceal it from observation, and held his whip and hat in one hand.

"Dearest," he began, bending over his wife's chair, "a great grief has settled upon our family; trials seem to thicken, and clouds to gather in our sky; these are troublous times, and it costs something to be loyal to the White Rose."

A sob was his only answer, and he went on.

"I am going to leave you; a message from a trusty friend and Lionel's extreme peril call me to London."

"To London!" echoed his wife, in dismay, "can you not despatch a courier who will attend to these affairs as well as you?"

"Nay, nay, an imperative necessity bids me go; but take heart, I shall not rush into danger. I can assume a disguise before I enter the city, and wear that over my coat of mail, and meanwhile, pray God to have me in his holy keeping!"

As he spoke, he pressed his lips to the brow of his wife, silently clasped a hand of each of the guests, and left the room.

When he was gone, Bonibell started from the apartment, and the page followed.

As he traversed the corridor, weary from his wanderings and full of regret at his master's arrest, he found a slight figure lying at his feet; it was Bonibell Seymour, who had sunk senseless to the floor after leaving the bower-room.

"Poor girl—poor Bonibell!" moaned Harold, compassionately; "I do not believe Valeria Lyndhurst holds my master half as dear as she, or will grieve so deeply at his fate," and lifting the *petite form*, he bore it tenderly to the window which he flung open to admit the fresh air. The breeze soon revived

her, and as she gazed inquiringly into his face, he murmured:

"You must have fainted, Bonibell."

"When, and where?"

"I found you in the corridor when I left my lady's bower-room."

Boy as he was, he saw and understood the shiver which crept through her frame, and for an instant the impulse was strong upon the girl to tell him all, but pride kept her silent.

"You see how it is, Harold," she exclaimed, beginning to practice the self-control which she afterwards maintained; "I felt such a keen sympathy with the duke, the duchess, and the rest of you, that it was too much for me, and like a foolish girl I swooned. Good even," and rising, she glided to her own chamber.

(To be continued.)

## THE LIFE ELIXIR.

My mother's uncle, Otho, came from Gottingen. He was a strange old man, a chemist by profession, and a believer in every mystic absurdity ever hatched in Teuton brain. Crossed in love in early youth, it was supposed that his trouble had in a measure disordered his intellect. It may have been so. I doubt it. It is my belief that he was born the strange being he lived and died—that nature made him a monomaniac.

You will scarcely credit me when I tell you why he left Germany, yet it is the solemn truth. One day a dead lady's body was found in his laboratory, amidst preparations calculated, on the authority of learned chemists, to consume or change it.

He was arrested for murder, but at this point the dead woman's husband, a man of rank, appeared with evidence which acquitted him of the charge. He was my uncle's friend, and had adored his lost wife.

To comfort him, Uncle Otho had conceived the idea—terrible to most men, beautiful to those two—of converting the lovely corpse into an ornament which might be for ever worn next the bereaved husband's heart, and for this purpose it had been conveyed to the laboratory. It was a romantic fancy, but too ghastly for even the German mind to take to its kindly.

Thereafter, some amongst his neighbours insisted on regarding Uncle Otho as an evil magician, and he was hooted and pelted by the boys. In fact, Gottingen grew too hot to hold him, and he fled to his relations in England.

Often and often, perched on his knee, have I heard Uncle Otho tell the story to my mother, ending with a sigh and the words:

"Ah, mein Gott, I never have such good experiment in my life. Joost von veek, and I should av ad dat lady in von beautiful star, shoost so pig as mine and. Ah! if dis little fellow die, I makes a bracelet of 'im for you, and your years 'im always."

Whereat I would shriek and mother turn pale, and Uncle Otho shrug his shoulders and mutter, not politely it is certain, in his own tongue, "Well, well, these women are all fools, and my niece no better than the rest."

I have no doubt that if I had expired in infancy, Uncle Otho would at least have endeavoured to convert my remains into jewellery.

However, Fate ordained that I was to grow to man's estate, and to become Uncle Otho's pupil. His laboratory was my favourite dwelling-place, and I learned of him much that was useful and much that was pernicious; amongst other evil things, the tuesane belief in the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. You think me mad—perhaps I was; but on other subjects I was sane. Even the elixir I believed in with certain modifications, hardly hoping that life could be prolonged for ever, but that while life lasted, beauty and strength might remain.

In his old age Uncle Otho sought the potent potion which should wipe out wrinkles, re-gild grey hairs, and fill the veins with the red blood of youth.

To the last hour he believed he should discover it; and afterward, with never-failing health and youth, the transmutation of all metals into gold.

He died, leaving me as a legacy his laboratory, his recipes, and his mad belief in the impossible.

I was very handsome, and only twenty-one. My name, like my uncle's, was Otho.

Being wealthy, I had never been expected to follow any profession, and my idle time hung heavily on my hands. In the laboratory alone I found pleasant occupation, and there, I busied myself night and day, working ever to discover those two great secrets.

I told no one. I knew my parents would be alarmed for my reason should they guess what occupied me. I knew that sane men would believe me mad, yet I fancied I was only beyond my age, as all who make great discoveries must be at first.

It was a monomania. I dreamt of nothing else until Agnes Muir came amongst us.

She was an orphan, and had been placed under my mother's guardianship.

She was young, and wonderfully beautiful. Her hair was black as any raven's wing, her eyes so bright that looking at them one thought of jewels flashing in the sun. Her taper waist, her rounded bust, her delicate hands, her step, her voice, all awakened my admiration.

For the first time I began to take pains with my toilet, and to choose garments with a view to looking well in them.

She was fond of music, so was I. We spent many happy hours together. Very soon I was in love with her; so deeply in love that I forgot my laboratory, my dreams of the philosopher's stone. My saucy little sister Eve told me I was at last like other mortals, and complimented me on the improvement, and my mother encouraged me to woo Agnes, for she knew her good and pure, and mothers love good women for their sons' wives, even when they are not fair, as she was.

Sometimes I hoped, sometimes I doubted. At noon I said, "She loves me;" at night I said, "She never will." I dared not speak as yet, but watching her, I saw at last in her eyes a tenderness she tried to hide, blushes many and sweet stealing over her face, a wish to fly from me at times; and then I knew Agnes Muir returned my love.

At last I spoke, and she was my betrothed bride, and I was happy as mortal man may be.

As for my laboratory, but for my mother's housewifely care it would have been given up to dust and spiders. I never entered it.

I never should, perhaps, but that this happened one day.

I remember the hour as it were yesterday. The last autumn days were lingering, and in the balmy afternoon we were walking hand in hand under the trees. A few late flowers were in bloom, and our feet trod upon the last night's trophies, the wind-blown autumn leaves, golden and brown and scarlet, which lined the path. The windows of my homestead—our homestead, for we were thenceforth but one—glittered like sheets of polished silver in the last sunset radiance, and in the distance rose the purple mountain peaks. I had her hand in mine, and we had walked in silence for many moments, when she said:

"If time could only stop now, Otho, and leave us as we are!"

I caught her to my breast.

"It shall—at must!" I cried; "We love each other—nothing can alter to us now."

"But we ourselves must alter," she sighed. "Ah, Otho, I never felt before how sad that truth is. We must grow old. The face you think so pretty must be wrinkled, the eyes dim, the hair grey. I shall see you, who are so strong, so handsome, grow feeble and bent; and worst of all, Otho, one of us must die before the other. Oh, Time, Time—cruel Time! Would the elixir of life were a reality!"

She breathed this with her young eyes looking into mine, her young hands folded on my shoulder. I felt her bosom rise and fall, her heart beat, and I also could have cried out:

"Oh, cruel Time! can you make this creature old and wan and passionless?"

With the thought came rolling back upon me the mystic dreams of the old German—the wild hopes and fancies which he had instilled into my mind.

"The elixir of life is a possibility," I said to myself, and then I caught my darling's hand. "Come with me," I said. "I want to show you something, to tell you something."

And fled, her, all bewildered and amazed, through corridors and up long flights of stairs, until we stood before the door of Uncle Otho's laboratory.

It had a dismal look, a deserted air, but my mother's care had kept it clean and tidy. In the midst stood a great arm-chair.

I made Agnes sit in this, and kneeling at her feet, unfolded to her my dream of perpetual youth and beauty.

Already from many an herb and simple had been drawn a potion which in moments of faintness proved a sovereign restorative. Already great results had been attained by medicine. Why not go further—why not banish altogether the weakness and the deformities of age?

I went to the great bookshelves and brought down volumes, old and musty, and translated to her passages from their quaint old German. I opened also Uncle Otho's memorandum books, and culled passages of interest.

At last I said: "Agnes, tell me, do you think me mad; were Uncle Otho and myself the victims of delusion, or is this blessed elixir possible? Speak, Agnes!"

She looked at me. She bent forward. Her head lay on my breast.

Our lips met. Both young, both loving as lovers never loved before, both looking on each other's youthful charms with lovers' eyes—and now that it is over, I may say, both unusually beautiful.

Could we deny ourselves the fond hope that this bliss might be perpetual? At least we did not.

So from that hour I haunted the laboratory as I had never haunted it before.

My motive was redoubled; and she, Agnes, my betrothed, shared my mad secret, hoped with me, believed as I believed.

So the long days glided on, until the Christmas-tide had come.

Down in the comfortable kitchen my mother and her maids consulted upon cakes and puddings.

My sisters hung the house with evergreen and chattered of new dresses and Christmas parties, and of our own merry Christmas Eve dance.

That afternoon, quite late, Agnes and I stole to our laboratory.

That day I had distilled a strange, exquisite draught, after an old German recipe. To this another ingredient must be added.

"And if properly done," said the sage madman, "thou shalt see immediately the purple hue change to bright gold, and sparkle like unto it. Many men have lived unto a century, and yet been young, who have tasted daily of this; though in a million times thou mayst not once succeed in making it. It is a sovereign cure for all pain, and for wrinkles, and for grey hairs, and for sadnesses."

If not the elixir, surely something very like it; and we two stood with our eager eyes upon the gleaming liquid, slowly dropping into the darker draught with which it was to mingle.

She wore a dress of pale brown silk, like a dead leaf in hue, and coral ornaments. In this attire her dark beauty grew more exquisite. No lovelier creature ever lived.

It was on my lips to tell her so, when something happened; what shall I call it?—how describe it? I can only say that sense and thought seemed blotted out by pain. What it was, where I was—the cause, the meaning—were enigmas to me! All who have had the slightest personal experience of an explosion will understand what I mean.

For a while the world was chaos and I nothing.

To this day I cannot guess what caused the accident. Whether I had made a mistake—whether any meddling fingers had been at work, I do not know. It may have been my mad dream was a crime, and that for it I was punished.

They found the laboratory a mass of broken glass, and metal—the windows blown out, the coals in a furnace scattered on the floor; and picked me up for dead.

That the explosion originated somehow in this furnace, was believed; but how, I could not tell, nor could Agnes, for both were in one moment senseless as the corpses we resembled.

That graceful figure in the robe of dead leaf tints, with its ebony hair, its coral ornaments, its innocent maiden passion in its eyes—the figure, and the face of Agnes Muir—were the last things I ever looked upon; the last things I shall ever look upon in life, for in that moment I was stricken blind—hopelessly, totally, for this world at least, eternally blind.

One day I knew this; they gave to Agnes Muir the task of telling me the truth, and I heard it and lived.

It was more than blindness to me—it was death; death to all hopes and aspirations of my life. The science I had loved, the mad, sweet dreams of golden elixirs of beauty and of life, were at an end; and worse than all, I felt that I, blind and helpless, dared not claim the hand and heart of one beautiful as Agnes Muir.

She would keep her troth, I knew, but I would never demand the sacrifice. I schooled myself to coldness. I shut the agony of my loss in my own soul. I uttered no word of love to her; and one day, groping my dark way to her side, I said these words to her:

"Agnes, you are free. A blind man has no right to wed or woo. God bless you for your kindness to me—for what I know you would say and try to feel; but—"

I broke down. I could say no more. Perhaps at that moment I longed to hear what I perversely put it out of her power to say.

She only put out one soft hand, guided me to a seat, and said, gently, with a faint fall in her voice I had noticed of late:

"Let wooing and wedding be forgotten. I am your sister now, and will be your sister while I live, Otho."

So it was over—that passionate love-dream of boy and girl—with it my youth, as it seemed; yet I was not quite miserable, for Agnes was indeed a sister to me.

She had told my mother all, and thereafter there was no hesitation in her tenderness to me.

When in my helpless darkness I needed aid, a voice called me brother, and near me I felt Agnes.

She read to me—sang to me—and prayed beside me in our great pew in the quiet Sabbath.

She never forgot me for any one—never! In my saddest hour, when chafed and pained to perverse anger, I drove the rest away, she forsook me not.

Yet I had dreamt of her so long as my wife, could I be contented, but to be the helpless brother she led and ministered unto and pitied?

Answer me in your heart, if you be a man and lover who read this.

Yet the worst came afterwards, with the step and voice of Harold Malcolm.

I had never seen him, but I used to fancy him—tall, fair, athletic, with soft blue eyes, and a smile like his voice.

I used to sit and imagine how he was looking at Agnes Muir while he spoke to her.

Sometimes they sang together. I would never sing now, though she often asked me to, and once the last duet we had practised for that Christmas party that never came.

I know how mad men feel—how their blood must boil, when I remember those hours.

Once—it was a sweet June day, with the breeze from the river sweeping up the garden path—some one proposed a walk.

I heard them rise, and then Agnes put her hand on mine.

"What are you waiting for?" I asked, rudely.

"For you, Otho."

"Then go. When I wish to be led, I'll call some servant. Go walk with Harold Malcolm; he suits you better than I. He is handsome, isn't he?"

"Very," she said, and sighed.

"Don't sigh for him. Go—doubtless he's waiting," I said.

Oh, how harsh my voice was, with the cruel pain and wrath in my heart.

And her step glided away from me, and I was alone.

I coveted no elixir of life at that moment; the draught I longed for was that of oblivion.

So from my mad Uncle Otho's legacy I had won this: To sit blind, helpless and despairing in my early youth. I, who had dreamt of perpetuating strength and beauty, might not even take slow, almost unconscious, leave of them like other men. They had been snatched from me in a moment; with them love and hope. A bitter judgment.

I heard adown the garden path laughter and merry chat. All the world was glad but I—so it seemed to me.

I groped my way to my own room and locked myself in. Let that room keep the secret of my solitary agony.

Yet I battled with myself. I said:

"If Malcolm loves her, and she can love him, dare I complain? Must she go through the world unmated because I am no mate for her?"

"Let youth and beauty wed each other, and thou blind man—victim of thine own folly—bear it at least in silence. Some day death will come."

After that I grew braver. But I drove her from me persistently.

So in the summer days it was Harold Malcolm in the lawn, and in the garden, and in the porch, with Agnes and my sister; and in the winter evenings Harold Malcolm by the fireside; his clear voice, his merry laugh, his frank ways winning all hearts, even mine. He was good, he was brave. If she must wed, surely I should be thankful it was a man like this.

And I had been blind more than a year, and Christmas-tide was upon us again, and in the merriment I found myself one evening happier than usual.

So that, after all had been singing and playing through the Christmas Eve, I said to Agnes Muir, the first time I had directly spoken to her for days:

"Agnes, why do you never play now? You sing, but you do not play. She has a brilliant touch, Mr. Malcolm, and feels with the composer. Let me hear. Will you, Agnes?"

There was a dead silence—a strange, dead silence, as though I had frightened them all. Then in a low voice Agnes answered:

"Not to-night, Otho."

"Why not to-night? Because I ask it?"

"Otho!"

"There can be no reason. Agnes, you are not bashful, and Mr. Malcolm is no stranger. I demand the performance."

Suddenly I heard a sob close by me, and turning, caught my little sister Eve about the waist.

"What is it, little one?"

"Oh, Otho, nothing."

What did it all mean?—what could it mean? Why did I feel terrified?

I repeated:

"Play anything—only play."

And my sister put her lips to my ear and whispered:

"For the love of heaven, do not ask that again."

Mystery of mysteries, what was all this? Something that cast a gloom over all—that hushed the song and chat—that sent Agnes away from us early, and made Malcolm say good-night before the evening was ended.

I pondered over it, sitting in my easy chair, before the fire, as the clock was striking twelve, and Christmas was born to earth once more.

Then I heard the door open. Lights were of no use to me, and the room I knew was dark; the fire, too, must have smouldered low; and I sat in a great chair that hid me from anyone entering. Whoever it was could not have seen me.

Whoever! ah, I know at once that light step—not even Eve trod so, my little fairy sister Eve. It was Agnes Muir—no other. She crossed the room, and sat down at the piano. I heard her touch the keys. I listened; she was playing the treble part of a favourite air. I listened longer; she played it through, still only the treble. Again. "Now," thought I, "I shall hear all." I heard the treble only for a second time. Then I groped out of my chair toward her. She gave a cry:

"Who is there?"

"Only I, Agnes. Play that again for me—play it with both hands."

"Otho—I cannot."

I groped on farther; I found her; I caught her by the waist as she tried to fly.

"Agnes, why not?" I asked. "I will know."

"I wanted to spare you," she said; "I meant you should never know. Otho, that fearful day, one year ago, when you lost your sight, did not quite spare me. I held something for you in my left hand, you remember—"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"The glass vessel was shattered, and—oh! Otho—the fingers that held it also. Have you not noticed I have never given you my left hand? I have none to give. Otho, don't grieve for me! Otho—"

I had caught her to my breast; I had burst into a passion of wild tears. I was foudling her as a mother might a wounded babe.

"My patient suffering darling, I—I did it—I, madman that I was! And all this while no word of reproach, no murmur. Oh! the little hand—the soft white hand! And you never told me, Agnes."

"I did not. You suffered too much already, Otho."

I had forgotten everything; I had my lips to hers—her heart beat against mine.

Suddenly I remembered. I thrust her from me; I turned cold as ice.

"Forgive me," I said. "I forget you belong to Harold Malcolm; you are mine no more. Oh! Agnes, Agnes, Agnes!"

"I belong to no one," she answered, softly.

"Surely your heart is not blind, Otho. Harold Malcolm comes here to woo your sister Eve; they are betrothed."

"Eve? Eve is a child!"

"She is sixteen. A year has altered her much. Oh, Otho, Harold Malcolm is one to love for beauty—why should he woo me? You would scarcely know me now! my poor face is so scarred, and I have grown so thin!"

"The face—the sweet, sweet face! And no one told me!"

"I forbade them, Otho."

All her true love and pity for me rushed upon me then; my blind heart received sight. I stretched my arms towards her.

"My love—my life—my treasure—my Agnes!" I sobbed. "Come to me—come to me! Blot the black year out—forgive me! For your sake I have striven with my great love; and you—"

She was my betrothed bride.

Once more she was folded to my heart; and I knew, though she had not spoken, that she had suffered even as I.

In the glad new year, Eve and Harold Malcolm were married.

A crowd came to look upon the handsome pair; and there was feasting, and merry-making, and rejoicing; and carriages rolled to the church and from it; and the robes and jewels—as they told me—were of the richest and the costliest.

The same week, Agnes led me over fields, and through still lanes, to a humble parsonage, where an old man made us one.

We wore no finery, we kept no feast. Quietly we wed, quietly she led me home.

She has led me ever since through life—heavenward!

And there, at last, we shall realise the wild dream of my boyhood—perpetual youth and beauty, and eternal joy amongst the angels—God helping, and forgiving us.

M. K. D.



AN ENGLISH HOSPITAL IN PARIS.—The Messrs Galignani, of Paris, have built and endowed a hospital for the English poor residing in the city. It is situated on the new Boulevard de Bineau, and contains twenty-five beds. It is placed under the direction of an English sister of charity, and two English surgeons have undertaken to give gratuitous attendance. The property has been formally made over to the English Ambassador by the liberal founders.

## MADCAP.

### CHAPTER I. CHERRY COTTAGE.

Nor far distant from that famed seat of learning, Cambridge, Mr. Phineas Newcum occupied a beautiful residence, surrounded by elegant grounds and numerous shade and fruit trees, which, from the prevalence of that particular kind of tree, had acquired the name of "Cherry Cottage."

One fine summer's morning, a young gentleman, fresh from London, got out of the train, and approached the lane that led to Mr. Newcum's residence; for the house was quite a distance from the road.

He was dressed in the most elaborate style, and had evidently "got himself up" for the occasion.

His white coat was tied with that degree of nicety that would have pleased the eye of Beau Brummel himself.

His clothes were of the most fashionable cut, and a perfect fit; he wore a jaunty little hat, made of some white material, of a pattern borrowed from the Japanese; and he twirled a gold-headed switch between the thumb and fore-finger of his right hand.

Whatever other people may have thought, he considered himself handsome; and he had taken great pains to adorn that beauty, though there was not a regular feature in his face.

His nose and moustache were the prominent features.

One was inclined to turn up; as if disgusted with the other, which protruded in enormous exuberance beneath.

Originally of a bright red in colour, it had been brought to bristly, bushy black, by the free use of pomatum.

Nor was that the only cosmetic that the subject of our pen-and-ink portrait used; for his face showed unmistakable traces of "lily white" and "Vestris bloom," by which he thought to disguise the natural sallowness of his complexion.

He had little, squinting eyes, and over his forehead his hair was arranged to fall in careless black masses.

We have been thus elaborate and particular in our description of that young gentleman, because he is no "fancy sketch," but an original, and one of a numerous and increasing class, who can be seen any fine day in Regent Street.

"What on earth can possess folks to have the entrance to their houses down a lane, or up a lane?" soliloquized Mr. Leopold Onwey, as he toiled up the carriage-way leading from the main road to the mansion, in a high state of perspiration, "or in a lane at all, and give me the trouble of walking through it in the sun, too? Phew!" he continued, as he reached the gate, paused beneath the refreshing shade of the lordly elm, and fanned himself gently with his hat. "I'm fatigued to death, and melted afterwards." They ought positively to put awnings over all these counfounded country lanes; and, if ever I get into Parliament, I'll make them do it. I wonder how I shall prosper in my love-suit to-day? It's very hard work, although I take it pretty easily. It will much depend upon the quarter from which the wind of the old boy's temper blows; first he tells me that I shall have her, and then that I shan't. But I must make a violent effort, and bring her to the point myself. But it's very fatiguing."

With these reflections he entered the gate, and passed into the grounds.

He had not proceeded far when he came upon Mr. Newcum, at high words with his gardener.

"Confound it!" cried Mr. Newcum, in a very peppery condition for such a warm day, "how dare my servants take such liberties with my property—cut down my poplar-tree, and—"

The old gentleman paused, fairly out of breath with wrath and indignation.

"It was Miss Wallace's order, sir," replied the gardener, resuming his work, as if that was excuse enough, and perfectly indifferent to the indignation of the irate proprietor of Cherry Cottage, who had laid such particular stress on the personal pronoun "my."

"Confound Miss—"

Mr. Newcum began at high pressure, but he put on the valves. Then he continued:

"Never mind. But, if I catch any of you obeying any more of Miss Wallace's orders, I'll discharge him—there. At least—well, no, perhaps I won't do that; but I'll talk to her."

The gardener nodded his head, and moved away to another part of the grounds.

The storm had ended in the usual manner. The inmates of Cherry Cottage were rather used to Mr. Newcum's outbreaks, and not greatly frightened thereat.

Mr. Newcum turned around, and saw his visitor.

"Ah, Onwey!" he cried pleasantly.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Newcum?" responded Onwey.

"Well, is it all right?"

"No, sir," returned Mr. Newcum, frowning again.

"It is not all right. Nothing's all right; everything's all wrong; and I'm in a diabolical ill-temper."

"Sorry for you: it's very fatiguing. I merely came to ascertain how my prospects stand with Miss Wallace."

"I wish, with all my soul, you'd take her away and marry her at once."

"I've no objection, if she'll go and get ready."

"She's the torment of my existence. A self-willed, uncontrollable, provoking, harassing—"

Mr. Newcum paused, either for the want of breath or adjectives.

"Don't excite yourself," remonstrated Leopold Onwey. "It's so fatiguing. But, now, do you really think I have a chance?"

"Oh yes! she said yesterday you were a very pleasant young man."

Leopold looked pleased.

"Indeed?"

"Yes; you said so little, and that was so utterly harmless and insignificant."

"Ah! don't you think that was rather ambiguous?"

"I've made up my mind: She shall marry you."

"I'd rather she had made up hers; but if she objects?"

"Then I'd carry her off by force. By Jove! I'll give you leave."

"Too fatiguing," replied the indolent Leopold. "She may carry me off if she likes."

"Pshaw! Now look here. I've made up my mind to get rid of her: I won't be tormented with her any longer."

"I say, Mr. Newcum, do you know I've my doubts of that amanuensis of yours?"

"Doubts, sir? What do you mean? He's a young man of great ability, and the highest integrity."

"I mean with regard to Miss Wallace. I fancy, somehow, he's smitten in that quarter."

"Eh? what? Preposterous! My amanuensis—engaged expressly to assist me in my great work on the best methods of cultivating dwarf pears—dare to—"

—Poh! poh! deputed upon it, if he's smitten in that quarter, I'd take good care he shouldn't be long before he was smitten in another quarter. I say you shall have her. Come with me into the house—I'll speak to her at once. But I must speak to her alone: so you go into the library, and wait until I come."

## CHAPTER II.

### MR. NEWCUM'S TORMENT.

MR. NEWCUM found Volatila in the parlour, playing operatic airs on the pianoforte, and imitating the Italian style of singing in a manner very trying to nerve nerves. He could but pause upon the threshold, and gaze at her in admiration; for the picture she presented was truly a lovely one.

She was a beauty of the gipsy order—of *petite* figure, but lithe and vigorous. The warm blood of youth and health glowed ruddy in her brown cheeks; her eyes, as brown as hazle-nuts, sparkled restlessly in their sockets; her lips were wreathed with a constant smile; her teeth were white and even; and she had a perfect wealth of chestnut hair, that clustered in innumerable little rings over her brow, and down her neck.

She was simply attired in white, with brown ribbons; but she looked the very personification of fun and mischief as she sat perched on the music-stool, running from octave to octave, and sending out cadenzas and trills with a bird-like velocity that would have driven a *prima donna* of the opera crazy with jealousy.

After watching and listening until he was tired, Mr. Newcum shouted "Brava! Brava!" just as they do at the opera.

She stopped at once, and looked at him.

"Good-morning, guardy," she said, with mock seriousness. "My dear, cross-grained, agreeable, ill-tempered, darling guardy, good morning."

"Miss, I want to ask you one question."

"Now, don't puzzle me. Is it a difficult one? Because, if it is, I'm sure I shan't be able to answer it."

"No, miss, it is a very easy one—simply, are you not ashamed of yourself?"

"Oh, dear, no; not at all!" she answered, quite innocently.

"What did you mean by having all the books and tables taken out of my study, and sending workmen to add it to your conservatory?"

"Because, my dear guardy, I was sick of those nasty, musty books, and am very fond of bright, pretty flowers."

"And I say," cried Mr. Newcum, angrily, "that I will not allow these impertinent liberties."

"Was it in a passion, then?" answered Volatila, coaxingly, as if speaking to a peevish infant. "Poor dear! calm its perturbed spirit, like a dove as it is."

Mr. Newcum was inclined to smile, but he repressed the inclination.

"Go along, do!" he snapped out; "and then—worse and more flagrant injury—how dare you order that poplar to be cut down?"

"How dare people plant horrid poplars before my bedroom window?"

"Do you know the veneration I attached to that poplar—the 'Newcum Poplar'—called after a great-great-grandfather, and a namesake of mine, who fought in the old French wars, and himself discomfited a company of forty Frenchmen?"

"Forty, guardy? What a brave Newcum! But I'm afraid that's a bit of a fib!"

"Not at all. Met them in a forest. They wanted to take him prisoner; but he discomfited them all by running away!"

"O-h! then he wasn't such a brave Newcum, after all."

"The mischief's done now, and can't be repaired," resumed Mr. Newcum. "But now understand me once for all, Volatila. I will not allow you to conduct yourself in this reckless manner: you are under my authority, and—"

"And, my dear guardy," she interrupted, with all the assurance in the world, "you know, as well as I do, that I won't be contradicted. You know, when poor papa went away, that he told you I was not to be thwarted or contradicted in anything, because of my delicate health."

"No, miss: your papa said nothing of the sort. It was your foolish doctor; and he's in a lunatic asylum."

"Well, I don't care who said it, I won't be contradicted; and if I choose to walk about with my back-hair down, if I choose to play at billiards, you know very well I shall do so."

"Very well, miss; you'll not do it here. I've made up my mind; you shall be married, you shall—by the fallen honour of the Newcum Poplar!"

"An oath of much might; and the idea is by no means a bad one. Please, who's to marry me?"

"Well, I think—"

"Oh! pray don't consider me. A general officer or a penny-postman's all the same to me. Perhaps you would like to marry me yourself?"

"Heaven forbid!"

"Or your amanuensis, Mr. Bryant, perhaps?"

"Pshaw! nonsense. I mean Mr. Leopold Onwey."

"Do you really? Now, my dear guardy, what is the use of talking all this nonsense? You know very well I won't be married unless I think proper!"

"I know very well you won't do anything unless you think proper."

"You mean, unless I think it right and proper to do."

"No I don't, miss. I mean what I say—that you are the most self-willed, obstinate, tiresome, unmanageable—Don't look at me in that way; I won't have it. I'm in a furious passion!" She threw her arms around his neck and approached her cheek to his.

"I—I— Bless your pretty face!"

Cunning witch! she knew how to manage him.

"There, there," she said, coaxingly; "it's all over, isn't it? I say, guardy, what a bad tailor you employ!"

"What is that to you?" he cried in surprise.

"Everything. Don't I wish to see my own dear disagreeable guardian the best-dressed guardian in Cambridge? I'll ask Mr. Bryant to send you his tailor; he dresses charmingly."

"Mr. Bryant? Employ my amanuensis' tailor? Although I admit Mr. B. to be a very meritorious young man, I don't exactly see why I should call in his tailor."

"Certainly, if he is a better one than your own. Look at your coat! I never saw such a comical thing in my life. And I don't like that nasty black ribbon you have got for your eyeglass. Wait a moment."

She skipped away to the table, searching for something.

He watched her airy motions with admiration. For the life of him he could not remain angry with her five minutes together.

She came back with a pair of scissors in her hand.

deliberately out the black ribbon in two, threw it away, and put his eyeglass in his hand.

"There," she said. "Now put the glass in your pocket."

"How dare you do that?" he cried in a furious passion. "Do you suppose I'll put up with these liberties from a bit of a girl like you? If I have wavered a little formerly, I'm as firm as adamant now. You shall be married, and I'll be rid of you."

"Poor old dear!" She twined her arms around his neck, but he pushed her away.

"Get away. Nothing on earth can move me."

"But what would my good guardian say, when he found that his poor little ward, who is anxious to see him look smart, had worked a nice chain for him, all of her own hair?"

She held up the chain tantalizingly before his eyes. "Eh? what?" he cried, with all the gratification of a child that is presented with a new toy. "For me?—a chain?—own hair? You don't mean to say for the old cross, passionate—Volly, my own darling pet, give me a kiss."

She kissed him, fastened the eyeglass to the chain, and placed it around his neck.

"Well, now, guardy, about my marriage?" she asked, archly.

"Never mind that now, my love; I must think about it."

He was not in such a hurry to get rid of her now. How well she understood him!

"I always thought poor papa wished me marry your nephew, Clinton Moffat?"

"So he did, my dear; but never speak of him. A boy who could run away from home, and send no tidings of himself for years, must have been a bad boy, and gone wrong. He shall have no ward of mine. I haven't seen him for fourteen years. I never wish to see him again."

"But suppose I'm in love with him, and have made up my mind to marry him?"

"How can you be in love with a boy you can scarcely remember?"

"Oh, never mind, guardy! If I chose to marry a man I never saw, I think I should do it, you know; and perhaps poor Clinton has done no harm, after all."

"Perhaps not. I hope not. But I have long ceased to think of him, one way or the other. But we must not talk of marrying anybody just yet—will we, my pet?"

"Not just yet, guardy. Where are you going?"

"Only to write a few letters. See you again presently."

So saying, Mr. Newcum withdrew.

The letters were merely a pretext; he was going to tell Mr. Leopold Onwey that he had decided to postpone his ward's marriage indefinitely.

### CHAPTER III. THE AMANUENSIS.

VOLATILA resumed her seat at the piano, and rattled away as before, until interrupted by the entrance of a person who would have attracted more than a passing glance in any situation.

He was a young man, some twenty-five years of age, of tall and commanding stature, athletic, and finely proportioned.

His smooth, beardless face was bronzed to the hue of a Spaniard, whether by nature or the elements, it was hard to say. His hair was black, and worn quite short; his eye was a clear grey; and a genial smile hovered constantly around his thin lips, without detracting from their look of energy and decision. This look was heightened by the firm, square chin. He was dressed in a suit of black.

This was Mr. Newcum's amanuensis.

A humble position for such a man to hold. You would sooner have imagined him in uniform leading a regiment. If he had not been a soldier, he had just the figure for one.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Wallace," he said, respectfully. "I thought Mr. Newcum was here."

She welcomed him with a smile.

"You thought wrong, you see," she answered. "But you can come in," she continued, seeing that he paused on the threshold.

"I only wished to—"

"Come in, I say. Good gracious! will you do as you are told? One would fancy I was of no importance in this house—nobody seems to mind me."

He smiled, bowed, and approached the piano-forte. "Excuse me, Miss Wallace, I think you seem to order most things your own way."

"Why, you see, Mr. Bryant, I have a will of my own; and they say, when one has a will of one's own, it's easy to get a way of one's own. I want to learn German. Can you teach me?"

"I—yes, Miss Wallace," returned Bryant, diffidently. "I should be proud of the office; but surely at school—"

"Oh, hang school! Don't talk of school. I hated school, and especially I hated German; for the horrid man who taught it always wore hideous boots, and smelt of tobacco. But stop. No, never mind the German. I want you to pity me, Mr. Bryant."

The amanuensis had been long enough in the house to feel no surprise at any caprice of hers.

"Can there be any grounds on which Miss Wallace is to be pitied?" he asked.

"Oh, acres! but particularly on this ground—that my guardian wants to marry me."

Mr. Bryant appeared disturbed.

"What? Himself?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No, no; poor man, he'd like to live a little longer; and he knows the fate of the man who marries me."

Mr. Bryant looked as if he not only had courage, but a strong desire, to undergo that fate.

"No," continued Volatila. "He wants me to marry Mr. Leopold Onwey."

"What?" returned Bryant earnestly. "That empty, shallow, conceited fop, without thought, feeling, or intelligence? A selfish animal, who has not an idea beyond his toilet, or a thought beyond himself?"

"You speak warmly, Mr. Bryant."

"Excuse me, Miss Wallace," responded Bryant, with heightened colour, as if conscious of having betrayed himself. "I spoke unguardedly, and have most unpardonably forgotten my position and your presence."

"Don't be uneasy, Mr. Bryant," she hastened to say. "I think absolutely as you do."

Mr. Bryant drew a long breath of relief.

"It was once arranged, I believe, that I was to marry a certain nephew of my guardian's. But he seems to have turned out an idle and good-for-nothing scapgrace."

"Indeed, Miss Wallace, you do him great injustice," returned Bryant quickly.

"Goodness! Why, what can you know about him?"

"I—oh, nothing! I mean you may be doing him an injustice."

"I know this—that he has been wandering about under an assumed name."

"You know that?"

"Yes; and the assumed name into the bargain."

"And that is—"

"Edward Bryant."

"What, Volatila, you know me?"

"If gentlemen will leave copies of 'Lalla Rookh' about with their names in them, what's to prevent their being known?"

"And you forgive my innocent deception?"

"Yes, if it be innocent; and if you tell me why you entered this house in so clandestine a manner."

"At once. I had always known of our proposed engagement, and I was anxious to see and judge of the lady to whom I was committed. Secure of not being recognized, I obtained the post of amanuensis to your guardian—to be near you, and form my own opinion. Need I say that the reality has overpassed my wildest anticipations?"

"I suppose that's a compliment; so thank you. And now, sir, please to account for your flight from home, and subsequent behaviour."

"Volatila, I was your father's favourite as a boy; and he so dazzled my boyish mind with his accounts of travels, war, and adventures, that after his departure my mind would dwell on nothing else. After a few years, the desire to follow him overcame all other feelings. I fled from home, managed to reach India, found him, and by his kindness and patronage, I joined the army; for I am no amanuensis, but an officer, Volly."

"Oh, say no more, say no more," interrupted Volatila. "That one fact binds you to my heart for ever. Oh, Clinton!"

"Then you forgive me?"

"How freely!"

He stole his arm gently around her waist.

"And can you love me?"

"I can at least try very hard, and think I shall succeed."

"Dearest Volatila!"

He clasped her in his arms, and imprinted a kiss upon her yielding lips. A dry "Ahem!" startled them both.

They looked up. There stood Mr. Newcum in the doorway, a perfect picture of surprise and bewilderment.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### MR. NEWCUM'S DETERMINATION.

"Eh? what do I see?" cried the astonished old gentleman. "It surely can't be; where are my glasses? By the Lord Harry! it is—my ward and my amanuensis in each other's arms! Oh, you precious pair; and I've sent Onwey away! Here,

Richard!" he continued, shouting out of the window to his coachman, "run after Mr. Onwey, and tell him to come back this moment. Hang me if you shan't be married on the spot, miss. As for you, sir, leave the room, preparatory to leaving the house."

"Don't answer," whispered Volatila in his ear. "I'll make all right; go to the library, and I'll soon join you, and take my first German lesson."

Thinking discretion the better part of valour, under the circumstances, Clinton quietly withdrew.

Volatila burst into an uproarious fit of laughter as soon as he was gone.

"Why, guardy," she cried, "what a shocking fuss you are making about nothing!"

"Nothing?" snarled Mr. Newcum. "When I want my amanuensis to dictate some letters, and looking for him, at last find him embracing my ward!"

"Well, surely that's a pleasanter occupation than copying letters."

"If you don't marry Mr. Onwey next week, I'll be hanged!"

"Poor, dear, old guardy! I'm so sorry for you; for you're sure to be hanged! Never mind: if nothing interferes to prevent me, I'll be sure to come to your execution. By-by; poor dear bird! he's got his feathers all turned the wrong way. Never mind, I'll come and smooth them for him presently. By-by, ogre; I declare I'm quite frightened at you. Ugh! you ferocious old gorilla!"

And the wilful girl danced lightly out of the room.

Mr. Newcum took out his handkerchief, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

What on earth, he thought, was going to become of this girl? He wished, people wouldn't go and get shot, and leave their daughters to him. Ah! there was a twingo. The rheumatism was coming on again; he thought it would. In this unhappy state of mind he was joined by Leopold Onwey.

"Here I am, back again, you see," said that fiducial, coming leisurely into the room, and fanning himself with his hat. "Always obliging; but it's most excessively fatiguing. I say, my old friend, isn't this rather a weak-minded game of yours? In the course of the last month you've sent me away and fetched me back fifty times."

"It's not my fault," answered Mr. Newcum; "but I won't send you away any more. You post off, and get a license, and I'll have the whole thing settled off-hand. She's a prize my boy—an heiress in her own right. A—h! there's another twingo of that rheumatism. She'll kill me before I can get rid of her now! After all, you'll earn the money pretty hard, I can tell you, my fine fellow."

"Impossible; never earned a shilling in my life."

"She'll dress your hair for you."

"Good gracious, Mr. Newcum!" cried Leopold, in alarm. "I hope you never saw my hair in a state to require dressing."

"Well, she'll address it for you, then."

"No she won't; never allow any liberties taken with my hair."

"She'll lead you a pretty life."

"Well, I'm easily led, that's one comfort."

"And drive you to distraction in a month."

"Well, so that she don't ask me to drive her anywhere, I don't care."

"What! will nothing ruffle your temper?"

"My dear Mr. Newcum, I don't believe I've got a particle of temper to ruffle. But, I say, how has your temper managed to withstand it so long?"

"Temper?—withstand it? What do you mean, sir? Where is the mild, gentle disposition I inherited from my forefathers? Gone, sir—gone: irredeemably ruined by that torment of a girl. I am a fury, now, sir—a fury. Only the other day I caught myself swearing. Ay, you may stare. I often do it. I give you my word of honour. And shall I put up with a girl who gives me the rheumatism, and makes me anatomize my own servants? Never. Take her, sir—take her; and I heartily wish I could give you my rheumatism and my diabolical temper into the bargain."

"You are far too liberal," answered Leopold. "But here comes the lady."

Volatila dashed into the apartment in a high state of excitement.

"Mr. Newcum," she cried, "do you think I'll put up with this?"

"With what, miss?"

"With what? Why, I was going into the stable to see after my pony, and that obstinate creature Richard positively prevented me, saying it was by your orders, as there was a vicious horse there."

"Richard was quite right."

"And if you suppose that I am to be controlled by Richard, or by you either, Mr. Newcum, I promise you you are very much mistaken. Into the stable I will go when I please, if there were a troop of wild horses there, or tigers either."

"Then I shall have a padlock put on the door."



"And I shall have the padlock knocked off the door."

"For shame, Miss Wallace! Do you perceive Mr. Onwey?"

"Oh! he's not easily overlooked," responded Volatila, coolly. "Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, Miss Volatila," returned Onwey, indolently, not at all abashed either by her temper or her coolness.

"Come," said Mr. Newcum, with decision, "to cut this very short, I am determined that this gentleman shall be your husband. He is here for the purpose of announcing his readiness."

"Dear me! he is extremely good; but suppose I object?"

"You can do so, if you please; you'll marry him nevertheless."

"Whether I will or not?"

"Whether you will or not."

"Oh! very good. I'm extremely obliged to you for consulting my interest in so remarkable a degree."

"You are very welcome. I'll be tormented by you no longer. I know what's for your good, and must be a better judge than a mere child like you."

"Child! Well, I admire that of all things in the world. Why, I'm past seventeen. Child, indeed!"

"Yes, miss—child. And you are not fit to direct yourself. I ask you, are you not much nearer the helpless state of infancy than I am, miss?"

"Certainly, guardy. And are you not much nearer the helpless state of dotage than I am, oh?"

"Why, you impudent young—"

"Come, come," she interrupted, coaxingly. "I'm sure my kind, indulgent guardian won't part with his affectionate ward."

"He will, though—by all that's good and true."

"Although she does tease him a little sometimes," continued the provoking girl, in the same strain.

"It's no use, not a bit of use," rejoined the obdurate guardian.

"He knows how dearly she loves him, and he will never have the heart to send her away from him."

"Won't he, though? We shall see."

The soft arms were twined lovingly round his neck.

"No, he won't. He's a foolish, cross darling, and he won't."

"Go away from me! I—I—I tell you it's no use."

"But if I tell him I love him better than any one in the world, and promise to be a good girl, and give him a kiss?"

And she did kiss him. It was no use, he was compelled to return her embrace.

"I—I— You darling!"

Then turning pettishly to the observant Leopold, he continued:

"Confound it, sir, didn't I tell you this morning to go about your business? My ward is not going to be married at all!"

"Oh, come!" exclaimed Leopold, a little indignantly. "This is rather too much of a good thing! You've been chattering me backwards and forwards so long that I must put an end to the fatigue; and as the lady is here, I'll speak to her myself!"

"But, sir, I tell you—"

But Volatila checked his impetuosity, whispering:

"Leave him to me, guardy; I'll dispose of him. Just you go and amuse yourself for ten minutes, there's a dear."

Mr. Newcum thought her fully capable of attending to her lover, so he went to amuse himself by turning his amanuensis, Mr. Bryant, out of the house.

"Remember, Mr. Onwey," he said at the door, "I give you ten minutes, and not an instant longer."

## CHAPTER V.

### LOVE-IN PHASES.

"Now, sir," inquired Volatila, "may I ask what you have to say to me?"

Mr. Onwey stroked his moustache, and tried to look languidly.

"My answer is very simple," he began. "I am in love."

"With yourself?"

"No, with you, charming Volatila. I am aware of the fatigue I am laying up for myself by falling in love, but I know no cure for it. Can you tell me one?"

"A cure for love? Yes, sir. You yourself are the very best cure I know."

"Ahem! you are severe, Miss Wallace. And yet your guardian assured me that you were favourably inclined towards me."

"Oh, he was making fun of you!"

"Not he! I defy anybody to get any fun out of me!"

"Well, I am disposed to agree with you there, Mr. Onwey."

Leopold, quietly ignoring the rejoinder, continued:

"But, whether you are favourable or not, it is cer-

tain that I am—hem!—horribly—ah—distressingly in love with you."

"Dear me! I can scarcely credit it. You must make some mistake."

"No—hem!—no. By George! I suppose I know my own mind."

"That's tantamount to saying that you know nothing."

"Pon my word, Miss Volatila, you are too bad."

"Well, then, suppose we admit that you are desperately in love with me. In that case you would do of course anything that I required of you."

"Anything, everything—possible or impossible."

"I must put your love to the test, you know," she continued, teasingly, "before I could venture to return it."

"Oh, certainly—of course. By all means, Miss Volatila."

He began to think that she was coming round at last. Of course she could not long resist a man of his appearance.

Like some other people in the world, Mr. Leopold Onwey had a pretty good opinion of himself.

"Well, I shall do so," she continued. "If you really love me, you will do me the great favour of—"

"But you won't do it."

"If I don't, renounce me."

"You must do me the great favour of cutting off those moustaches."

"What!" cried Leopold, fairly petrified with horror.

"A mere trifle—simply to cut off your moustaches."

"A trifle? Why, you might as well ask me to commit suicide at once."

"You refuse, then?"

"My dear Volatila, do you know what you are talking about? Those moustaches are the admiration and delight of every lady of my acquaintance."

"And for that very reason I want them off. I should be jealous if my husband were so much admired."

"Oh, but, hang it! you're not serious, now, eh?"

"Never more so in my life: you must renounce either me or the moustaches."

"But, now, just look at them, and say if you really can have the heart to sacrifice them thus. Whew! the very idea has thrown me into an uncomfortable heat."

"I am fixed, sir; off they must come, or off you must go."

"Miss Wallace," said Leopold with solemnity, "I ask time for consideration."

"You shall have it, sir—half an hour," returned Volatila, a solemn as an owl. "Go and reflect."

Mr. Onwey had never been so perplexed before in his life. Even his sluggish blood began to flow in a lively way.

He believed the girl must be mad. He began to pity Mr. Newcum, and think he must have a hard time of it.

There was no help for it: she was inexorable. So he left her—to reflect.

Volatila, when he was gone, threw herself on the sofa, and laughed long and loudly.

There was no denying it: the spirit of mischief surely possessed her.

Clinton came into the room, looking quite woe-begone.

"Well, Mr. Bryant," laughed Volatila, in a saucy tone, "you look remarkably lively, I must say."

"Do not banter me, Volatila," he answered, "I am in despair. Your guardian has dismissed me; I must leave the house at once."

"Stuff and nonsense."

"He has said it, and I must obey him. He is master here."

"Is he? Don't you be quite so sure of that. I say you shall not go."

"It is my only consolation to think that you wish me to stay."

"Indeed I do. What! were you not my dear father's friend? Are you not my—"

"Oh! Finish the sentence, Volatila."

"My friend, too?"

"Nothing more?"

"What more would you have?"

"Can you—need you ask?"

"No; I need not. I am a madcap, Clinton, and cannot talk seriously for two minutes consecutively. There is my hand; let that be my answer."

He grasped her extended hand and covered it with kisses.

"Eh?" cried a shrill voice. "By all that's good, they're at it again!"

Mr. Newcum had surprised them again.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SETTLED AT LAST.

"I was but taking leave of Miss Wallace, sir," said Clinton

"Taking leave of Miss Wallace?" echoed Mr. Newcum, in quite an irascible state. "Taking leave of your senses, sir, I should say, as Miss Wallace has taken leave of all propriety and decorum. Bless my soul! I can't come into my drawing-room without finding my amanuensis kissing my ward. Now, sir, perhaps as you have taken leave of Miss Wallace, you will be good enough to take leave of my house. As for you, miss, I will speak to you when this gentleman has gone."

"I hope you will speak to me before then, guardy, because 'this gentleman' is not going at all."

"You are mistaken, miss; I have dismissed him from my service."

"And I have taken him into mine!"

"Oh, as a companion, I suppose! Very pretty, upon my word! You are a modest young lady, you are!"

"I hope I am, sir," replied Volatila, demurely. "I have engaged Mr. Bryant to teach me German."

"German? Can't you say Sanscrit? or Coptic? or Zulu? I'll be bound you'll learn as much of one as the other. And suppose I object to this pretty arrangement?"

"I should be very sorry, of course; but I shall make the 'pretty arrangement' just as though you did not."

"Will you, by—Ahem!"

"I will, 'by—ahem!'" said Volatila, mimickingly.

"Pray, do not let me be the cause of any dissension," interposed Clinton.

"Sir," cried Mr. Newcum, sharply, turning on Mr. Bryant, "I request you to leave the house at once."

"And I request you to remain in it," peremptorily rejoined Volatila.

"By the powers, this is too much! Am I to be bearded in my own house? Oh, you pert girl! Now, sir, are you going?"

"No, sir," answered Volatila, emphatically. "He is not going."

"Then I'll ring for the servants to put him out."

"And I'll discharge the first servant that answers the bell."

"You discharge my servants?"

Mr. Newcum was getting as hot as pepper.

"Certainly. You wish to discharge my German master; why shouldn't I discharge your servants?"

Mr. Newcum was bewildered.

"Well!" he cried, "of all the cool, impudent, provoking—"

Ugh! there's another touch of the rheumatism. You little serpent! you've brought on another attack; and I believe you'll drive me mad into the bargain."

"Come," said Volatila, soothingly. "I'll do anything you wish me; and that, I'm sure, will put the rheumatism to flight."

"No it won't. But let's see what you'll do. Give up that Bryant at once."

"Oh, I'll give up Bryant," answered Volatila, readily.

Clinton was about to remonstrate, but she stopped him with a sign.

"Good," said Mr. Newcum, with satisfaction. "I feel a little better, but I haven't trust your near me any longer. You must be married, and you must marry Onwey."

"Well, if he has used his razor, perhaps I will."

"What do you mean by using his razor?" snappishly.

"Why, Mr. Onwey professed unbounded love for me, and I merely requested him to give me a proof of it by shaving off his moustaches."

"Why, what the deuce made you ask him to shave off his moustache? But he'll do it, of course; he'd shave off his eyebrows, shave his head into the bargain to secure you."

"I'm by no means sure of that."

"Don't talk nonsense."

"I never do, guardy."

"Don't talk at all then. The idea of a man preferring a pair of moustaches to a pretty wife, and a prettier income is such a piece of preposterous idiosyncrasy that—"

But here he comes. I hear his step. Now shall we see?"

Clinton glanced at the door with some anxiety as Leopold Onwey entered. He was sure the moustaches had won.

Leopold had not shaved it off.

"Miss Wallace," said Leopold, "I am plunged into the profoundest despair. The agony I have undergone in the last ten minutes, both mental and physical, is something frightful, unbounded. Delirious as is the love I bear you, I feel that the sacrifice of these moustaches would undermine my health, shorten my days, and drive me into a state of helpless imbecility."

"Why," cried Mr. Newcum, irascibly, "do you mean to tell me, sir, that you are lunatic enough to give up six thousand pounds a year, and the prettiest girl within fifty miles for the sake of retaining a hideous pair of moustaches?"

"Hideous?" echoed Leopold, in amazement.  
 "Revoltingly hideous. Be a man, sir; and cut them off at once."  
 "Cut them off? Good gracious! I should never dare to look a woman in the face again. Miss Wallace, I appeal to you."

"It's no use appealing to me, sir. My decision is final. Volatila Wallace without your moustache, or your moustache without Volatila Wallace."

"I really cannot do it. I should never survive it."  
 "You idiot," Mr. Newcome whispered in his ear.  
 "Cut them off; and when you're married, let them grow again."

"Grow again?" echoed Leopold in consternation.  
 "Would they ever attain the graceful pitch of perfection they present now? Old man, you are talking of something you don't know anything at all about."

"Am I? At all events, I'll do something I know something about. Here, Richard, bring me my shaving apparatus. By Jericho! I'll shave you myself."

"Stop, guardy," interposed Volatila. "Pray stop. The sacrifice is useless; for if Mr. Onwey came with a bald head as well as a bald lip, I would not marry him."

"What?" roared Mr. Newcum.  
 "There," exclaimed Leopold. "You hear; it's no use—she won't marry me; and hang me if I'd marry her."

"Sour grapes," said Clinton, *sotto voce*.  
 Leopold measured him disdainfully with his eye, and having taken a good look at his proportions, concluded not to resent the remark.

"You know when I say a thing I mean it," continued Volatila; "and I have said that I will not marry Mr. Onwey."

"Why, you promised. Confound it! I shall have you left on my hands, after all."

"No you won't, guardy. I promised conditionally, and the conditions have not been complied with. Once for all, those moustaches repel me. Still, I will relieve you of my mad ways for the future, by transferring them to this gentleman."

Great was Mr. Leopold Onwey's astonishment to find that she designated the person he knew as Bryant.

"What?" cried Mr. Newcum, in equal surprise, "my amanuensis? Why, you said you would give him up."

"I said I would give up your amanuensis—Mr. Bryant. I do so; and take for my husband your nephew, Mr. Clinton Moffat."

The surprise of her hearers was increased at these words.

"Eh? Pooh!" exclaimed Mr. Newcum, putting up his eyeglass, and taking a good look at Clinton. "And yet, now I look again, I do believe it is Clinton Moffat. Why, you madcap, have you come home at last?"

"Suspend your judgment, sir," said Clinton, "till you have heard my story, and I think you will acquit me of all blame. Suffice it to say, sir, that I am an officer in the army, on furlough."

"An officer?" repeated Mr. Newcum, looking pleased.

"An officer?" was the mental reflection of Mr. Leopold Onwey; "and without moustaches? He can't be much of an officer."

"At all events, guardy," said Volatila, "I am satisfied with Clinton's past, and will myself be responsible for his future."

"Well, well," grumbled Mr. Newcum, "I suppose I must submit. You will be married, at all events, and I may escape the rheumatism and the lunatic asylum. I wish you joy, Clinton."

"The possession of my darling Volatila secures it, uncle."

"I wish you joy too," said Leopold; "but you'll find it dreadfully fatiguing. However, I'll come and see you executed—I mean married. I consider it my duty to be in at the death—I mean ceremony; and I shall indulge in a new suit of black, and a pair of white kid gloves, expressly to use on the melancholy—I mean joyful—occasion."

"Perhaps you would like to officiate as groomsman on the occasion?" suggested Clinton.

"Delighted—a kind of volunteer aide on Cupid's staff. You see I know a little something about military matters; been in the service myself."

"You?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did you serve?"

"Oh, no. I was exempted."

"From what cause?"

"Softening of the brain, I suppose," interposed Volatila.

"They didn't call it by that name," resumed Leopold; "though it might have been. But I see that I am like the fifth wheel of a coach here; and I know that you will excuse me, and thank me for going. I have the pleasure to wish you a very good day."

Mr. Onwey retired with all his accustomed grace; and having started our hero and heroine on the high-road to matrimony with every prospect of a favourable journey, I do not think that we can do better than to follow his commendable example. G. L. A.

#### A HOME BY THE OCEAN-SIDE.

MINE is a home by the ocean-side,  
 Where the billowy surges foam;  
 And I love it well, for my heart is here,  
 And I cannot from it roam.  
 'Tis a cherished spot this home of mine;  
 For my sires dwell here alway;  
 And it ne'er shall be said their son despised  
 His home 'midst the rocks and spray.

Oh! I love the rocks by my sea-side home,  
 As they kiss the pebbled shore,  
 And I love the mystic music  
 Of the ocean's endless roar;  
 And when the fleecy summer clouds  
 Hasten each other by,  
 Passing lovely they seem to me  
 In the waters and the sky.

When the winds are loosed from heaven,  
 And angry storm-clouds come  
 Ranging in columns athwart the sky,  
 With their battle armour on,  
 A low, deep mean, filled up with wrath,  
 Bursts from the mighty flood,  
 As comes from afar the swelling voice  
 Of an angry multitude.

Here is my grotto upon the beach,  
 Where in childhood's hours I played;  
 And here are the little rocky shelves,  
 Where pebbles and shells I laid.  
 They lie here now as I placed them then,  
 I loved them as human things:  
 Oh! happy and glad were my boyish days  
 With their wild imaginings.

Oh! I love my home by the ocean-side,  
 And never will leave it for aught  
 That the world may give in its pomp and pride,  
 Though with power and honour fraught.  
 'Tis a cherished spot, this home of mine;  
 For my sires dwell here alway;  
 And it ne'er shall be said their son despised  
 His home 'midst the rocks and spray.

M. W. J.

#### EDITH PROCTOR.

"THERE! is it not a second Eden? Do you wonder that a man should want to come back and die in the shadow of such trees?"

I glanced around. I had seen beauty in both art and nature long before this. My brain—the busy, restless, vivid brain of an artist—had teemed with visions of loveliness; but no dream or reality could ever have exceeded this.

The long, gradual sweep of rising ground, corded on the one edge by a winding river, threading its way in and out like a dainty maiden; and relieved at the back by a dense border of woods, thick and dark. Here and there a mass of ragged, perpendicular rock cropped out; then, above it, a row of that wonderful, suggestive, midnight green. Such trees! as my father said, in their depths might lie the enchanted realms.

Between the woods and the river was spread a perfect picture. Fields of waving grain, golden-headed, that trembled in the summer air like a sea; orchards glistening in the sunshine; and, for a foreground, a lawn, extensive, close-shaven, dotted with clumps of evergreen, relieved by the long, light, shadowy sprays of African cypress, or the mournful crimson arms of the blood-beech, drooping from a slender trunk.

And then the house—old grey stone, moss-covered, and hung about with clustering creepers, whose bright blossoms glorified the dimness, as the stars the shades of coming night, ere the sky has put on her robe of blue. If you could have seen this picture as I saw it for the first time, cradled in the arms of sunshine and summer, you would have held your breath, even as I did.

This place—this Avonswold—lying here steeped in bewildering beauty, should have been my birthright. I felt then how cruel had been the hand that had barred me out, that had cursed my father.

Old Hugh Avonswold, sleeping under his tablet of costly carved marble, had done this. I glanced at my father as he leaned against a giant elm. He seemed part of the place. Once there, you could hardly feel satisfied to find him in any other spot.

His tall, though somewhat bowed, yet still elegant figure, the slender white hands, the limbs that would not in their palmy days have disgraced an Apollo,

the handsome face, for it was still handsome in spite of thinness and care, and with that expression of refinement born of generations of culture. There was nothing common about him. I had often thought thus when comparing him with other men. Yet in all our wanderings there had hung about him that sense of being out of place. He never appeared to take root anywhere. I knew now what all his life, since his marriage with my mother, had lacked.

That marriage had been his evil destiny. Some blind fate had hurried him on. There was no need for him to step out of his sphere; and wed a ballet-dancer; but having done it, I, his son, honour him for the truth and courage with which he kept to his vow.

There were two sons in the Avonswold family—Hugh and Lawrence.

Hugh followed in the steps of his father,—married to his liking, a widow of abundant means and one child, an infant daughter. So the name of the disowned son was never mentioned.

At the father's death a sufficient pittance was left him to ensure that there should be no trouble respecting the will.

If young Hugh Avonswold left no children—which seemed hardly likely, as he had four then—the estate was to go to Miss Proctor, her heirs and assigns for ever. That was my uncle's step-daughter.

By some strange fatality, they all did die. When we came back, Miss Proctor held Avonswold.

Twenty-five years before my father had left it, a very young man—ridden down this wide avenue gaily, gone to London for a visit, and meeting his fate, been conquered by it.

My mother loved him dearly. There was warm Spanish blood in her veins, and bewildering Spanish beauty in her face. Her birth was noble enough, too. This perhaps was why she held herself so loftily.

She married my father in utter ignorance of the prejudices against her; indeed, he never told her until my birth, when, after repeated efforts at reconciliation, he was driven forth with a curse.

My mother had ever been the guiding spirit of our household.

When destitution stared us in the face, she took to the stage again.

My father made some feeble remonstrance, but he could not endure the biting stings of poverty.

This was in a foreign land.

At her death, or at least some months after, we had returned to England; for I could see the longing to revisit his native land was wearing deeply into my father's soul.

They had both taken much pains with me. Though I reversed the natural order of things, and inherited from my mother great force and energy of character, from my father that winning, easy refinement, amounting almost to indolence, yet life had been too stern a necessity for me to indulge in a more than momentary idleness.

Then, too, I was ambitious. My whole heart and soul was in my art. I had attracted much attention at Paris, young as I was. I intended, after a few years' sojourn, to go back, or indeed at any time when my father grew weary.

He had made two excursions to Avonswold alone. Tempted by his description of its wonderful beauty, I had accompanied him this morning.

And listening to his exclamation, two distinct emotions had rushed over me.

A consciousness that I, inheriting the proud old name, should have held these lands as the last of the family, instead of seeing them pass into the possession of a stranger.

And the other! Looking into my father's face, I read something that made me shiver. "To come back and die in the shadow of these trees!" That was his wish.

I could not remember him as otherwise than pale and delicate, but I understood now what this wonderful transparency, the brilliant lips, the bright, restless eyes, and sudden vivid flashes meant. He had indeed come home to die.

My love for him was, I think, different from that of most sons for their fathers. It was a watchful, protecting love, a desire to shield him from care, from want, and to surround him with all possible luxury. I had unconsciously caught my mother's feeling, her cherishing affection. And he was slowly, surely slipping away from me. The only human tie I could call my own, the only being who loved me.

And though my nature was strong, it was not a solitary one. I felt, in that moment, I must have something to love, or life itself would be a lingering torture.

There was a sudden rush that bore down and scattered the summer wind.

At a glance I took in so terrible a picture that an involuntary cry of terror rose to my lips.

A proud, handsome horse, with wild strained eyes



and erect ears, galloping at a furious rate, and something hanging to the saddle, dragging on the ground.

I sprang forward, and closed my eyes. It took an almost superhuman effort to check that headlong speed, but I did it.

My father uttered an exclamation, and hastened to my assistance.

I held the horse in a grasp of iron, while he bent to examine the prostrate form.

"Thank heaven!" ejaculated a young, rich voice. "But for you what a terrible fate must have been mine. I have no words to thank you."

With my father's help, she rose and began to disengage her dress from the saddle.

"Are you not injured?" I began, in astonishment. "A little bruised, perhaps, and a good deal frightened."

She shivered, and her eyes dropped.

"Poor Hero!"

And she turned to pat the neck of her horse, who stood pawing the ground, and trembling in every muscle.

"Poor Hero, what could have startled you so? And yet my fall was partly due to my own carelessness," she added, turning to me.

"Thank heaven, indeed, for your narrow escape. But you will not mount again? Allow me to lead him. I am afraid you are more seriously injured than you confessed."

"No, believe me," Her tone was very earnest. "And I am at home, or nearly so. Will you oblige me by leading him to the gate?"

My father and I exchanged glances. He said, with his own quiet dignity:

"Miss Proctor?"

She bowed.

"You will at least give me the name of my preserver?"

The question was addressed to me. I did not look at my father, but answered, steadily:

"Victor Avonswald."

"Not—"

She drew a long breath, and her face flushed warmly. A lovely face it was.

"High Avonswald's grandson," I said. "And this is my father. A month ago we came from the Continent."

She possessed that charming frankness which wins one with scarcely an effort. And now she said:

"I know the story of the past. There were some restrictions on the Avonswalds, but I am free from them. Will you accept my welcome to this place?"

We were at the gate. There was a picturesque little lodge, and an old white-haired gate-keeper came forward.

"Will you take Hero?" she said to him; and gathering up her dress, she would have ushered us within the portals. I drew back.

"You decline my thanks—my gratitude?" she said, meeting my eyes steadily. "Is your father as obdurate?"

I saw he was wavering. She remarked it also, and hastened to take advantage of it.

So warmly did she press him, that they entered the avenue.

I followed, unable to resist, and quite as powerless in deciding whether I was acting wisely or not.

The house was old, but in good repair. So few things about it had been modernized, that I could hardly realize where I stood.

Wide halls, large rooms, low ceilings, and deep, broad windows.

The furniture was in antique style, corresponding well with the apartments. A piano, and book-case, filled with books, alone looked new.

Miss Proctor gave her principal attention to entertaining my father.

I could see she was making rapid strides in his regard.

Sauntering around, I examined some old pictures and a few other curiosities.

"An artist?" I heard her repeat; and then I turned my eyes to her vicinity.

She looked so lovely now—her face a glow of rich colour, her hair soft and silky, falling in waves of rippling gold over her shoulders.

"There are some beautiful views in this portion of the country," she went on. "You must bespeak his attention for them. And while you stay in this neighbourhood, I shall take it as a favour if you will allow me to bestow the liberty and hospitality of this place upon you."

I could see my father was rapidly yielding to the fascination of her manner. Her voice, too, so tenderly persuasive, was well calculated to charm. In the meanwhile, I was trying to decide whether good or ill fortune had directed us hither.

Curiosity as well as filial love had drawn me to the place, but I had not intended to take more than an exterior survey of it. And yet I felt wonderfully at home within its walls.

Miss Proctor gracefully exposed herself at length, and left us alone.

There was a glow in my father's eye that gave me both pain and pleasure; a delight in seeing him look as he used in the old happy days before my mother died; and a jealous pang that something altogether unconnected with me should afford him such intense satisfaction.

"A fortunate accident, Victor," he said, presently. "How well she bore it; though I wonder she was not killed. If the horse had gone twenty yards further—"

"Don't!" I interrupted, with a shiver. "The thought is too horrible."

"She is a brave girl. Look from this window; over yonder you can see the church spire. All the Avonswalds are asleep there. Promise to lay me by them, Victor. My mother was gentle and loving; if she had lived, it would all have been different. Hugh was older than I, and his father's pride, so it was right she should love me best. I could not have come home and braved familiar faces. I am glad no drop of their blood runs in her veins. Is she not beautiful, Victor?"

He spoke with almost childish eagerness. His whole form seemed trembling with excitement.

"Be calm," I said, entreatingly.

"I am so glad to be here. I had not dared to dream of entering these portals, once more—and to be welcomed. Victor, you must like her, for my sake."

There was a rustle in the hall, and Miss Proctor entered, robed in pale blue silk, that enhanced her fairness. The ringlets had been left untouched, except to be wreathed with a stem of ivy.

A servant followed her, bearing a tray containing cake, wine, and fruit.

My father accepted her hospitality readily. Some impulse, hardly satisfactory to myself, led me to decline.

"So," she said, "after rescuing me you refuse my friendship. Do you consider me an interloper here?"

I coloured involuntarily, and for a moment found myself without answer.

"I confess I never heard the story without experiencing a strange sympathy for—for your father. I am glad to welcome you at Avonswald; believe that I have the right."

"I do not question it."

"I should think the pride belonged by right to your father."

"I am not sure it is pride," I answered, warmly. "There is a possibility of exposing myself to unjust suspicion, by accepting too readily—"

and the smile lurking in the corners of her mouth embarrassed me.

"You cannot trust me to understand you, then?"

I felt ashamed of my coldness, my want of confidence. Holding out my hand for the glass of wine, I said, frankly:

"I retract."

There was a curious power about her. Yielding to it, I felt myself drift rapidly down with the current. I caught her sparkle and animation, and presently became really gay. My life hitherto had been a constant succession of changes, new scenes, new friends, and incidents so strongly bordering on the romantic, that even here I felt to strangeness.

"Remember," she said, as we rose to depart, "Avonswald is at your service, and I have a claim on your friendship. You will come soon again?"

With the last words her eyes were turned pleadingly upon my father. He assured her she would find him no unrequited guest.

We walked back in silence to our little inn. My first impulse was to return directly to London, but my father over-ruled me.

Failing in this, I took my sketch-book, and sauntered out.

I had intended to give Avonswald a wide berth; but, as if impelled by a strong magnetic power, I found myself nearing it, and presently sat down in the shadow of the trees near by where I had rescued Miss Proctor.

My customary application deserted me. I could not sketch, but fell into a fit of idle musing—something that had the force of premeditation. You may smile, but I felt as if I should one day be master of Avonswald. An easy thing enough, you will think, by marrying the heiress.

I had learned from our landlord's wife, a fat, good-natured, gossiping woman, that Miss Proctor was already engaged.

Our names attracting her attention, she had made us recipients of the whole history, though my father had known it mostly all before.

Old Hugh Avonswald had forbidden his son to receive the disowned brother; but, strange to say, this prohibition had not been extended to the children, though I think my father would not have returned

while one member of his own immediate family survived.

As Miss Proctor said, no restrictions had been imposed upon her, with regard to the place. One my uncle, her stepfather, had made—she could not marry until she had attained her majority.

Her lover was residing in Paris, and corresponded with her. Therefore I felt assured my behaviour toward Miss Proctor could not be misconstrued, indeed, if our acquaintance continued.

I meant to take the earliest opportunity of allowing her to understand that I knew her position. But it seemed the most probable circumstance to me that Miss Proctor, at her marriage, would go to her husband's home, and dispose of Avonswald.

What particular tie should link her to the place? It was a high aim to think of purchasing a home like this when I had yet name and fortune to make, in a strange country. But to a wanderer like me the thought of such a home was invested with many delightful attributes.

We lingered in the vicinity of Avonswald day after day, my father warmly opposing all thoughts of a return to London during the warm weather. It was impossible not to grow familiar with the fair mistress. She interested me strangely—puzzled me, too, I must confess.

I admired her, but I resolved not to like her. Indeed, when we came to the intimacy of friends, a point we were not long in arriving at, there seemed a constant succession of disputes.

In the main, our tastes and ideas were much alike, but she would rarely acknowledge a subject in the same light that I viewed it. I argued and persuaded, it seemed such a petty pride and willfulness on her part, while she grew stubborn or petulant, and sometimes left me with an angry flash in her eyes. Yet I observed at such times she was more than ever gentle and attentive to my father.

Early in September I went to London alone, to make some arrangements for the future. I had two letters of introduction, both of which proved of admirable service.

By means of the one I found a warm friend, and the other brought me some valuable influence.

I hired a studio, unpacked some pictures, mostly copies, and felt greatly encouraged with my prospects.

For my art I had an ardent, passionate love; still I was not a visionary dreamer.

I knew there was a great deal of hard work before me, and went at it with a resolution.

My foreign antecedents, I soon learned, would stand me in good stead; indeed, before the winter closed, I was not a little astonished at my good fortune.

The home that my father shared with me was simple enough. His tastes had long ago ceased to be extravagant. The only luxury he craved now was frequent visits to Avonswald.

I could not deny him, since Miss Proctor insisted upon the indulgence.

Occasionally she came to town for a brief visit. Some subtle charm certainly linked them together.

Now and then we spoke of her—I always coldly; he, with enthusiasm, and I thought he felt a little disappointed at my apathy.

"It will not do," I said, good-naturedly, one day. "I am not old enough to bestow upon her a fatherly affection, and all other might be dangerous. She makes no secret of Mr. Wylie's claim upon her."

He came close up to me. I was retouching the soft, fair hair of a Madonna, and somehow, just then, I had an uncomfortable idea it bore some mysterious resemblance to Miss Proctor. He studied it a moment attentively.

"Do you think she loves Mr. Wylie?" he asked.

"Possibly—in her fashion" was my careless rejoinder.

"Victor, you never do her justice. She is capable of loving deeply, sincerely. And if she were free—"

"Don't dream of such nonsense," I interrupted, suddenly. "Mr. Wylie will not be anxious to give her up, I fancy."

My tone was unconsciously bitter. At first he seemed about to reply, then walked away to the window.

"I wish you could get on better," he said, after a silence of several moments. "You might be very good friends."

"We are good enough friends now."

"No, you are not. I often observe you together. You seem continually to suspect her of something, and are for ever on guard. You question every sentiment, you weigh every word. There appears to be a warfare or antagonism between you."

"There is neither," and I laughed lightly. "As for being on my guard, that is well, you will allow. I neither wish to make her untrue to another, nor entangle myself in a hopeless attachment."

I had noticed before a certain endeavour to smooth

over the little difficulties arising between myself and Miss Proctor; but after this conversation he relinquished the attempt, and left us to our own devices.

I had a suspicion that Mr. Wylie was not a very exacting lover, and also that Miss Proctor's heart was not very deeply concerned.

She was true to him—that is, she received no other attentions at all likely to lead her to betray her trust. And she held a certain girlish remembrance of having once loved him dearly, which seemed to suffice.

Mr. Wylie's aunt had been left partly in charge of Avonswood and the young lady, but her second marriage, some months before our arrival in the place, had called her to a new home.

She would fain have taken her ward with her, but Miss Proctor liked the independence of her own house best.

She lacked then a year of attaining her majority, and this occasion had been her last interview with Mr. Wylie.

After her next birth-day had passed, her own nuptials were to take place.

She had, at first, spoken of her engagement, but latterly I could not help remarking that all mention of the coming midsummer annoyed her.

As the spring opened, she manifested a great interest in some improvements at Avonswood, and requested my father to come out and judge whether they were expedient.

That did not look much like leaving the place, I confessed, with a sigh.

My father, at my request, took a room at the little inn where we had first stopped, as he expressed an intention of spending much of the summer in the country. I had several short journeys on hand, and was relieved to know he would be pleasantly situated and well cared for.

Some orders had been sent me that were likely to keep me busy for at least two months. One was a landscape that interested me greatly; and after viewing various places, I selected Avonswood. It was June when I returned.

No familiar face awaited me at the inn, so I went up to call on Miss Proctor. How well I remember the cloudless summer afternoon, the flecks of sunshine filtered through the trees that bordered the avenue, the songs of countless birds, the hum of bees, the fragrance of rose and honeysuckle, and the weird, shadowy stillness. I almost coveted Avonswood at that moment.

As I approached, I heard voices on the balcony—or rather, a voice. A turn in the path revealed Miss Proctor to me, standing erect, flushed and angry.

"He shall have his freedom," she exclaimed, with a haughty intonation. "Heaven knows he need not sue in vain for such a favour." After he has once told me he has ceased to care for me—

"Victor!" my father said, rising suddenly, and coming forward.

Miss Proctor crumpled the letter she held in her hand, and for a moment was silent and embarrassed. I fancied, too, that my father acted singularly confused.

After a few moments, we were sitting there talking pleasantly enough. Yet the first words I had heard her utter kept ringing in my ears.

How wondrously beautiful she looked, with that half sorrowful, half indignant light in her eyes.

I knew what had occurred, even before my father announced a ruptured engagement. Edith Proctor was free. That childish folly was at an end for ever, and the woman within her might step forth to the light.

I had a wild, bewildered feeling on the subject, and at first I could not decide in what degree I felt relieved. I understood exactly what my father desired, though he did not approach so delicate a topic in words.

Should I, could I become master of Avonswood in the manner fate seemed to direct? For somehow I had a consciousness that Edith might be won.

I commenced my picture, setting up my easel at the inn.

Miss Proctor, certainly showed no symptoms of a broken heart. She was a trifle more distant, though she seemed to take a great interest in my proceedings.

I fell into the habit of spending my evenings with her, of discussing my plans, and we visited various points together to judge of the best effect.

She was a charming companion when art or literature alone was the subject under consideration; but the old restlessness, or rather, I think, suspicion of being controlled in any respect by another mind, was strong upon her, followed her like a shadow.

We were strolling upon the path one evening, when I noticed my father sitting on a step of the balcony, leaning against the vine-wreathed column.

The last rays of the waning light struck upon his face.

I started with a sudden thrill of pain. He looked

pale to ghastliness; the lines about his mouth were tense, his eyes sunken, his whole figure drooping with weariness—or was it shadowed by the wings of a phantom coming nearer and nearer?

I recalled with a shudder his first remark as we stood before Avonswood.

Since that day its force had been gradually lost on me, as I saw him interested in a hundred little things, and really displaying more energy than his usual wont.

What had I been thinking of in the fortnight since my return?

I glanced involuntarily at Miss Proctor, and read in her face confirmation of my worst fears.

"You think—" I said, fletingly, and then paused.

"He is growing very feeble. And you love him so! He loves you with a fervour I never saw equalled."

She was right. The world looked dark enough without him, for he was my all. My dying mother had bequeathed him to me, and since that time he had appeared more like a dear and cherished friend than a parent.

"I have hardly thought of him—of this, I mean," I said, hurriedly. "What can I do?"

"I know of only one thing that can be a supreme comfort. I ask it as a favour."

Her voice was low and tenderly modulated. Such tones had a curious power over me.

"What?" and I looked at her earnestly.

"Let him come to Avonswood. To me he seems to have a strong and sacred right. There are plenty of rooms at his disposal, and I dare brave old Hugh Avonswood's displeasure. I have no fear of his unquiet spirit's disturbing me. Here, where your father's boyhood was passed, let the later days end in peace."

"He can come when he chooses," I said, rather coldly.

"For how long?"

The question startled me. How long would he be able to endure even that walk? I remembered for a night or two he had sat down by the wayside to rest, under some trivial pretence.

"You will let him come? Think of his delight. And the servants are all fond of him. It will be no trouble."

"You are more than generous," was my slow reply.

"Test me, then. Let me see that you do not take it all for idle words."

I turned quickly, and our eyes met. Hers drooped, the long, fringed lashes sweeping her cheek. I felt the hand that I held on my arm tremble.

"Edith!"

My voice was husky, and faltered away like some faint breath.

And then my arm found its way around her, her head sank on my shoulder.

Did I love her? I hardly knew. It was the first time the slightest token of intimacy had passed between us, the first time I had called her by her Christian name.

Yet I felt the rubicon had been passed with that one word. There was no honourable going back for me.

"Edith," I began, presently, "I am well aware I ought not to aspire to your hand, or your love, until I am in a position where it will appear less presumptuous. But if I am mistaken, if it should be friendship alone that prompts you to this act of kindness—"

Her face flushed hotly.

I saw my error, and with a sudden, powerful impulse, said:

"I love you!"

The fast gathering anger cleared away. A sweet, warm, gratified smile came in its place. At least, I could not be mistaken as to her sentiments. Yet instead of feeling gratified, I think I experienced annoyance.

"I ought to tell you something of the past," she said, thoughtfully. "Three years ago I fancied I loved Mr. Wylie devotedly. We had been friends from childhood, and it was my stepfather's favourite scheme. At that time I had seen no society whatever. As you have doubtless been informed, he sought release from the engagement."

"Yes," I answered, rather hurriedly. "I know all this. Let the past go. We have only to do with the future. You love me?"

The last was as much an affirmation as a question.

"I am not quite sure what your ideas of love are," she returned; "but I confess mine have grown much more comprehensive and exacting during the last six months. I know now what I can give; I understand also what I require. Yet I think I can trust your nature, your heart."

It was most unromantic love-making.

I had indulged some two or three dreams on our first acquaintance, of what might happen if Miss Proctor were free; but this night we both seemed

most prosaic and commonplace, giving each other no real glimpses of the hearts we were bargaining away.

She was fearful of showing that she loved too much, I that I loved too little. And some blind fate urged us on until the compact was sealed with a kiss. Then we went to my father.

His joy quite overcame him at first. I felt truly then how frail his hold on life was. Then we discussed our arrangements.

I should have been more gratified if he had declined Miss Proctor's offer; instead, he accepted it with childish eagerness and gratitude.

Avonswood was henceforward to be his home.

I felt almost jealous that they should love one another so well.

At parting that night he kissed her white forehead, and called her tenderly, "Child."

We returned to our simple home at the inn.

He was very enthusiastic over Miss Proctor, and more than delighted at our engagement.

I could hardly quiet him sufficiently for sleep, and read to him from his favourite poets a long while. His breathing became regular at last, and I ventured to take a survey of the dear face.

How thin and wan it was! What faint, tremulous throbs the pulses were. And many a silver thread had found its way among the soft brown locks.

It was better, perhaps, that she should be continually in some one's kindest care; for if I fulfilled my promises, I must necessarily leave him much to himself. I think, too, he had a yearning, clinging love for a woman's gentle ministrations.

My mother's love had been of that delicate yet demonstrative order, where every thought is for the beloved one. He had missed her sadly, in spite of my tenderness.

Then I went out under the stars to think of my own future.

I was to be master of Avonswood. It galled my pride to know the gift must come through a woman, my wife. Why did some demon whisper she had bought me, and insinuate that terrible suspicion that I did not love her, and "blind contact" was drifting me into a marriage I did not desire.

I felt restless and ill at ease, resolved that I would love, then doubtfully questioned how far affection could be compelled. All was such painful hesitation and uncertainty.

The next morning Miss Proctor's carriage came for my father. He was installed in the room where he had dreamed away so many pleasant hours of youth and early manhood. When I witnessed his happiness, my heart smote me bitterly; because it was in the power of another hand to give what I could not, and because gratitude must be an ingredient in the compound of my love.

I devoted myself assiduously to my picture. Morning and night I walked over to Avonswood. The later part of the evening was spent with my betrothed alone. I made myself an agreeable companion, but I bore about with me the uncomfortable consciousness of effort. There seemed no freshness or spontaneity in my love. And I confessed with dismay that we did not assimilate as readily as in the old days, when my father's quick eyes had detected a little lack in our friendship. I was glad his senses had grown less acute, and that he believed implicitly in me.

For the first three weeks I fancied him improving rapidly. I began to hope he would be able to return to London with me, so you will see I was not counting on a speedy marriage, though Miss Proctor's birthday was near at hand. I had resolved to be fully worthy of her in position at least, before she became my wife. But inexorable Fate ordered it otherwise.

I went to Avonswood one evening, and found my father alarmingly worse. Edith had sent for a physician, and learned that the end was drawing nigh. He did not seem to suffer, but was insensibly sinking away, and might be released in a very short time. He told me this, and enlarged much upon her goodness, her ready and gentle attention.

There was a strange, wistful look in his eyes, something yet unspoken.

"What is it?" I asked. "What can I do?—if indeed Miss Proctor leaves anything for me to do?"

"Edith to you, Victor. Why are you vexed? She loves you so. Yes, you could make me happier still."

There was a suggestion of reproach in his tone.

"Whatever it is, you have only to speak, and it will be done."

"Have I? Then I will speak. It is the only wish left unfulfilled. Victor, in ten days Edith will be twenty-one."

I knew what he desired of me in an instant. I choked down a bitter, impatient feeling, and said, with all gentleness:

"I owe it to Edith that, after all her kindness, she



shall not be hurried into any rash step. And for myself, I should like to realize some dreams worthy of a woman's acceptance. Remember how poor I am still."

"As if Edith cared!" There was a smile of tender triumph on his pallid face. "Victor, I wonder if you will ever trust your eyes to look into her heart without fear and without prejudice. Oh, I beseech you, do her justice before it is too late. She is worthy of a king, and yet, for her all, she only asks a little love."

I felt condemned, humbled. Since I had once said I loved her, what right had I to withhold, to dole her out the smallest measure she would be satisfied with? Yet it annoyed me to feel her superiority in everything.

"You will not do it?" he said, hopelessly. "It shall be as she says," and I made a strong effort. "But you must not persuade her if she does not wholly approve of such hurried nuptials."

"No," the persuasion must come from you." It was true. Delivering myself body and soul to the swift stream it was impossible to contend with, I let it bear me on to the swelling main. I sought Edith.

With hurried, and I know now eloquent words, I urged my father's proposal.

Since it must be done, why should I delay?

"Do you really wish it?" she asked, with one of those eager, longing, penetrating glances into my face. "To me all times are alike. I can wait your pleasure."

I was a coward. I did not dare tell her—indeed, what did I have to tell her?—that the love any other man would have taken pride in, brought me no satisfaction.

That would have given the lie to all that had gone before. And I did love her in some curious, indefinable way.

I insisted, if I may so term my persuasion, and of course carried my point. The marriage would be very quiet.

Her guardian was to come that morning, when all legal formalities were to be arranged.

We could send for the clergyman at any time. He would require no very lengthy notice.

After that I spent much time with my father—he counting the days with an eager joyfulness, I, with a sort of proud indifference.

I honestly tried to render Edith happy; but I had a fancy she was either growing suspicious, or developing a phase of jealous exaction not pleasant for me to contemplate.

The more I gave, the more she demanded—not in that winning, fascinating manner of our earlier acquaintance, but as an unmistakable right she would have. Yet my anxiety for my father balanced this, and kept me cool.

The last day of my own undivided life was drawing to a close.

For nearly a week we had been giving my father stimulants, yet no one had openly spoken of the grim visitant whose shadow lay so fatally about us.

All day I had been there, caring for him with watchful patience. Yet I did not for an instant dream the end so near.

The physician's entrance had broken up my reverie concerning the coming morrow.

He went softly to the bed, raised the thin wrist, and took out his watch.

As I looked at him attentively, one of those startled shades of meaning flashed over his face.

I followed him to the door, and my eyes asked the question.

"Watch him closely," he said.

"The danger is not immediate?"

I would not believe.

"At any moment, I think. He cannot certainly last longer than midnight."

"What was it?" my father demanded, on my return to the couch. His eyes were preternaturally bright, his hands interlocked with excitement.

"Be calm," I said, reassuringly.

"He spoke of midnight—I heard him. Did he say I could not live until to-morrow?—not see your wife? not know you are master of Avonswald?"

"Do not think of that now," I replied. "You know it will take place."

"Will it? What if Mr. Wylie comes back? I dreamed he did. To-morrow—it is such a little while, and that is all I ask. Let me think; Victor, raise me up a little."

He had been dressed every day and gone to the sofa by the south windows; feebly, indeed, but with no assistance, except occasionally Edith's arm, all he would allow.

But now he bade me in an excited tone carry him hither.

"You had better lie here," I returned, soothingly.

"No, no! There are some letters. I ought to have done it before, but I did not think it would be so soon. Midnight. Oh, I believe I shall live to see you

married. Get a candle, Victor. I want to burn some papers."

"Let me do it for you."

"No! Quick, take me over there. I am wretchedly, terribly weak. I shall not ask many more things of you, Victor. But you'll love Edith—promise, promise!"

"Yes, I shall love her. Lie here while I get the candle."

He sank back on the pillow. I thought him dying!

"Won't you go?" he said, with reproachful impatience. "I tell you I must have it, or a match; something, hurry."

I went for the candle, bewildered by his manner, and wondering if his mind was not already straying off through those unknown regions.

I was absent for a moment only, but I found his brow dewy and his hands startlingly cold on my return.

Then I carried him to the sofa.

How I wished Edith was present, who always swayed him with such gentleness; but she had gone for a walk.

"Unlock this drawer—my hand trembles so. I wonder why I left it to the last moment. Now go outside, Victor, and close the door."

"No," I said, "I cannot leave you. Let me do it."

"Go away, Victor, go away. It is for you, after all. Why will you not trust me—not obey me?"

"I do, but—"

"Go, then."

I turned irresolutely.

"Oh, Victor!" and he fell on my neck, "forgive me. Don't be angry with me. Tell me you love me."

"God knows, better than anything in this life," and I kissed him fervently.

"Save Edith. She will always be best to you. Now go away."

The eyes were so imploring, so pathetic, with their strange, secret desire, that I left the room without another word. But I listened breathlessly. There was a faint rustle of papers—then a heavy fall.

I had feared this, and rushed to him with frantic eagerness. I laid him back on the bed. There was a faint motion, and the lips essayed some sound, then passed into the everlasting silence.

I was very calm. I remember shutting the drawer, and putting out the candle that made such a ghastly flickering in the radiant sunshine.

Then I went to communicate my grief to the house-keeper.

Edith met me in the hall. She had been my father's last gift.

A passionate tenderness for her filled my heart. Let me pass over that hour of confusion, that is quite distinct from noise or bustle, that follows a death.

The sun was down when I entered the room on some trifling errand.

Edith stood at the window, in the fading red light. One or two letters lay on the floor at her feet, one was tightly clasped in her hand, another, which she was reading, had the corner burned.

My sense of honour could not endure that. An angry flush filled my face.

"Edith," I said, sternly, "those letters were my father's; you have no business with them. How dared you?"

Her cold, haughty, yet triumphant smile stung me to the quick; and her tone, infiltrated with such bitter scorn, roused me almost to hate.

"I think you will acknowledge, on examination, that they belong to me. How they came here is perhaps best known to yourself. But they explain to me many mysteries. I have been a fool—a blind dupe. I know now that you do not love me—never have. But you wanted Avonswald. Well, I can tell you, you will never have it."

"Will you allow me to see those letters?" My face was at white heat with passion.

She handed me one—her own letter to Charlton Wylie; another, his letter to her.

"You see, I understand the whole plot—intercepted letters and all that; a romance that sounds very well on paper, but in real life, rather embarrassing when it reaches the point of detection."

The truth went through me like the quick, sharp stab of a dagger.

I went over to the couch, and took one long torturing look at that calm dead face, lovely in spite of thinness, and so peaceful.

What demon had tempted him to sin for my sake?

Such a cruel dastardly sin! Yet he was my father, and I loved him.

I think we learn in these bitter straits of life what a grand thing human love really is. My determination was taken.

"Yes," said I, turning to Miss Proctor, "you know all that is necessary. It will please you to be assured

that I relinquish Avonswald without a struggle. Think of me in whatever light you will."

With that I left the room. At first I hardly knew what step to take.

I paced the avenue awhile in desperate consideration.

A servant brought me out a note at length. I went to the gatekeeper's cottage to read it, for I knew it was Edith's handwriting.

"It is my wish—my prayer—that your father shall be buried from my house. It is the only favour I will ever trouble to ask you. You will be free to come and go and give all necessary orders. I do this for love of the dead."

EDITH PROCTOR.

I had no desire to make a scene at such a time. Since I had elected to myself the task of saving his memory, I would do all things required of me, and one that was not.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Wylie that evening, and explained that through the intervention of a third person, a very serious misunderstanding had been engendered.

For the rest I referred him to Miss Proctor.

I did not see Edith until the day of the funeral. Her guardian had remained. His behaviour toward me was rather suspiciously cool, but I bore it with composure.

My father was laid to rest in a corner of the churchyard sacred to the Avonswalds.

I put his sin far from me that summer day, and remembered only the years of tenderness that had always bound us together, thank God, even to the last.

I stated my intentions of returning to London immediately, preparatory to leaving the country for ever.

Then I bade the denizens of Avonswald farewell.

I noticed my ring was gone from Miss Proctor's finger. It was right, of course.

Then I went down to the little inn, and began to pack up my effects.

The next morning I turned my face from the place, never to behold it again, I said.

My father seemed to have passed into the keeping of others. I had no more to do with him.

It was mid afternoon when I entered my studio. The close, hot smell, and the covering of grey dust on everything for a moment disorientated me. But I had been my own servant many a time before, so I went to work resolutely. I turned several pictures out to the light, and then I came to one that made me think, for the first time since that fatal night, ages ago, it seemed.

For Edith Proctor's face looked on me just as it had the first day of our meeting.

Her beautiful face, shrouded in masses of hair that seemed steeped in summer sunshine, eyes tender, glowing in lustrous seas of white, fringed with those peculiar long lashes that looked as if they might ray off bars of gold. A cloud of half transparent azure about her perfect shoulders, that brought out tints of complexion wonderfully.

But it was not so much the beauty that impressed me now. It was a dim, struggling, indefinable sense of having loved and having lost this woman.

Yes, having loved her. The knowledge, as it flashed over me then, with its sharp pain, left me faint, gasping. As if the veil had been suddenly rent, I saw all the mistakes, all the petty pride, all the obstinacy that had blinded me. And she had loved me.

Many a time she had been patient with my petulance, gentle under uncalculated restrictions, and taken the coldness I had thrown out in bitter morsels, when love alone should have been her portion. What evil spirit had possessed me?

At the last the woman within her had spoken for outraged love's sake. No, she could not believe I had ever truly loved her. And I knew now, when it was too late, that I had.

Perhaps it was as well. I could not have saved my father's memory in any other manner. Suspecting me of this treachery would always keep her tender toward him.

There is after all great and violently strained emotions as positive a reaction.

By degrees I began to think my burden heavy, and cover her good opinion, and then to long for the love I had cast away, to look shudderingly into the future.

I did not go away as I expected. I fancied I wanted to hear Edith had married Mr. Wylie.

And yet, when I did not hear, it was such a blessed relief.

My few friends rallied me on my solitary life, my devotion to art, but I was glad to be alone. There was nothing for me but work; the long, terrible nights were sufficient for the anguish of thought, as heaven could testify.

Then came a hungering desire to go back to Avonswald. For what I could not tell. My father was

sleeping quietly enough in his grave. These dreary November winds could not disturb him. Why, then, should I go?

"I cannot tell; I only know I went. I rambled about the churchyard in a vague, desultory manner, until I came to a group of leafless trees, until I came to a woman pale and sorrowful, sitting among the ruins of the dead, brooding, perhaps, over a more painful ruin—that of a human heart."

With a blind, yearning impulse I knelt down there beside her. Burying my face in my hands, I uttered one bitter, sorrowful cry:

"Edith!"

"If it had been done for love of me—and her voice lost its way through the unsteady waves of anguish."

"Edith"—my voice was very low, for I hardly knew whether I had any right to say it—"Edith, I had no hand in that. And if I failed in my love then, God only knows how I have atoned for it since."

She glanced up with a bewildered face. The darkness was falling fast, but through it all I saw that deathly paleness.

"I thought once—and" she paused.

"Edith," I said, "there was a man who loved us both—who went astray in a moment of fatal weakness. Can any love of mine atone for him?"

"Your love?" She uttered the words questioning.

"Yes, my love. At first I struggled against it as a temptation, for you were to be another's. Afterward a fiend of pride haunted me; I could not bear to take so much at your hands, and give so little. But I am very humble to-night. Let my love plead for me."

She studied my face long and earnestly. Presently she said:

"I cannot tell when I began to mistrust my first suspicions. Mr. Wylie came, and on examination of some of the letters, I found by the dates they could not have passed through your hands alone. But it saved me from a fate I shudder to think of—marriage with a man I did not love, and never could have loved. So I waited."

"Thank God!" I exclaimed, involuntarily. "It is well, since it taught me to know my own heart. Can you give me back what was once mine—your priceless love?"

The fair head drooped on my shoulder.

"You will forgive him?" and I glanced over the grave. "I want to think, in those later days, between love and longing, his mind grew confused. But he always did you justice. The affection he bestowed on you need at times to make me almost jealous."

She smiled with faint sorrowful sweetness.

We walked home under the stars and opened our hearts to one another. Fear and distrust are shut out for ever more.

And so Edith Proctor gave me her love, and Avonswood. I won fame afterward, and was proud to lay it at her feet. A. M. D.

**ROOKS' NESTING IN NOVEMBER.**—At Gainfield Farm, Highworth, Wills, eleven pairs of rooks (where rooks were never known to have built before) have earnestly commenced building their nests, most of which are fast approaching completion, and one of the pairs has been actually sitting for incubation for three or four days.

**WENSTER, in his "History of Metals,"** published in 1671, makes mention of two places in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where formerly good argentiferous lead ore had been procured. One of the places was Bronghite Moor, in the parish of Slaiddburn; the ore held about the value of 67 lb. of silver in the ton; the other place was Skelhornfield, in the parish of Gisburn. It had formerly belonged to a person of the name of Pudsey, who is supposed to have coined it, as there were many shillings in that county which the common people called Pudsey shillings.

**THE SMITH IN THE OLDEN TIMES.**—In the turbulent infancy of nations it is to be expected that we should hear more of the smith, or worker in iron, in connection with more peaceful pursuits. Although he was a nail-maker and a horse-shoer—made axes, chisels, saws, and hammers for the artificer—spades and hoes for the farmer—bolts and fastenings for the lord's castle gates, and chains for his drawbridge—he was principally because of his skill in armour-work that he was esteemed. He made and mended the weapons used in the chase and in war—the gavellocks, bills, and battle-axes; he tipped the bowmen's arrows, and furnished spear heads for the men-at-arms; but, above all, he forged the mail-coats and cuirasses of the chiefs, and welded their swords, on the temper and quality of which, life, honour, and victory in battle depended. Hence the great estimation in which the smith was held in the Anglo-Saxon times. His person was protected by a double penalty. He was treated as an officer of the highest rank, and awarded the first place in precedence.

After him ranked the maker of mead, and then the physician. In the royal court of Wales, he sat in the great hall with the King and Queen, next to the domestic chaplain; and even at that early day there seems to have been a hot spark in the smith's throat which needed much quenching, for he was "entitled to a draught of every kind of liquor that was brought into the hall."

## TEMPTATION.

By J. F. SMITH.

Author of "The Will and the Way," "Woman and her Master," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

But then her face—  
So lovely, yet so arch—so full of mirth:  
The overflows of an innocent heart.

Rogers.

MADemoiselle JOSEPHINE felt exceedingly out of humour with herself and every one else, but more particularly with Sally.

The idea of having been neglected for a child—for so she considered her—was galling to her vanity—of which, to speak the truth, the tall opera dancer had more than her sex's usual share.

Ever since the young painter lodged in the house, she had her eyes upon him: his person and manners pleased her, and if not over head and ears in love, she had every disposition to coquette with him.

She evinced her resentment the following night by refusing to allow Sally to accompany her home—which the poor girl had been accustomed to do by way of protection—for, young as she was, she had more than once attracted the attention of those libertines who throng the purlieus of the theatres.

The consequence was, the poor girl was obliged to return to her lodgings alone. This lasted more than a week.

One night the performance had detained her later than usual, and Sally, with her little bundle under her arm, had just reached the top of the Haymarket, when two officers in undress emerged from some tavern in the vicinity—both were flushed with wine.

In those days, unfortunately, there were no police: a few aged, sleepy men, dignified by the name of watchmen, were the only guardians of the public safety.

"A Hebe, by Jupiter!" exclaimed one of the young men, seizing her rudely by the arm, and forcibly raising her face, which she attempted to conceal.

"Shares, Walter—shares!" said his companion.

"Pray let me go!" entreated the terrified girl; "I am nearly home!"

"Home!" hiccupped the first; "you shall go with me—I will provide you with a home!"

Sally struggled resolutely, but the speaker still kept his grasp upon her arm.

The hour, as we observed, was late, and no one was near, except the hackney-coachmen of the neighbouring stand, who thought it was no business of theirs to interfere.

"Don't be a fool!" said the well-dressed ruffian. "Can't you see that I am an officer and a gentleman? Of course I shall treat you handsomely!"

"Coach, your honour?" demanded one of the men.

"Yes—quick!" The fellow drove up; and the one whom his companion had addressed by the name of Walter attempted to force her into the vehicle.

The terrified girl, now seriously alarmed, began to scream for assistance.

"Curse your squalling!" roared the drunkard.

"All right, your honour!" said the coachman, assisting to lift her in.

Despite her cries, they had nearly accomplished their purpose, when the young painter, who was returning from a party, passed the spot: he recognized the voice, and a fury which he would have been puzzled to account for, even to himself, suddenly seized him.

To dash between the door of the coach and the assailant was the work of an instant.

"Walk on!" exclaimed the coachman, raising the butt-end of his whip.

"Rascal!"

"Whelp!" roared the officer, who still retained the struggling girl in his grasp; "by what right do you interfere with gentlemen?"

At the word "gentlemen" the artist laughed bitterly.

"Save me, Mr. Barry—pray save me!" sobbed Sally, overwhelmed with shame at such an outrage being offered to her in his presence.

The young man needed no second entreaty: with one blow he levelled the hackney-coachman with the ground, and seizing the aggressor by the collar, forced him to relinquish his grasp.

The disappointed drunkard shouted to his com-

panion, who stood laughing at a distance, highly enjoying the joke.

"Come along!" he said; "we shall find plenty in the Mall!"

"I'll have her!" roared Walter Trevanian—for the unmanly assailant of poor Sally was no other than the son of Sir Richard; "if you are afraid, you can leave me!"

He well knew that to cast an imputation upon the courage of his friend, was the surest means to induce him to remain.

"You shall see how much I am afraid!" replied the young man, flushed with wine and stung by the unmerited sneer.

So saying, he advanced towards Barry, and laughingly commanded him to walk on, and not interfere in an affair which did not concern him.

On the painter's refusal they came to blows. Although so young, Barry was exceedingly strong.

For some time he defended himself successfully against both his assailants—who, to do them justice, took every care to avoid injuring the helpless cause of their dispute.

With all his skill and courage, the defender of poor Sally must have succumbed but for the unexpected succour which arrived in the person of Meg.

Her mistress, alarmed at the lateness of the hour, had sent her in search of her lodger.

As we before stated, Meg was a tall, giant creature, on whom time had produced the same effect that it does upon the oak—rendering her more guarded and tough; her strength was no less remarkable than her person.

No sooner did she perceive how matters stood, than she quickly took off one of her heavy clogs, and struck Walter Trevanian a blow on the temple. He fell without a groan.

"You have killed him!" observed his friend.

"Not unlikely!" said Meg, in the coolest tone imaginable. "I seldom have occasion to strike twice!"

"Pass on, in heaven's name!" said the young man; "he has paid dearly enough for his folly!"

With the assistance of the coachman, who had partially recovered from the blow the young painter dealt him, the speaker placed the senseless body of his companion in the vehicle, and ordered him to drive to the barracks at Knightsbridge.

"Enough!" shouted Barry, as they drove off; "I shall know where to find you!"

"No, no!" sobbed Sally; "in heaven's name, do not think of seeking them—they would kill you!"

"Let them alone—bad men!" muttered Meg—who did not appear to think she had displayed any extraordinary heroism; "no pity for our poor weak sex!"

Neither the terrified girl nor her defender—despite the alarm of the one, and the bruises of the other—could forbear a smile at the observation of the speaker, whose recent achievement rendered it doubly amusing.

"Not so weak, Meg," replied Barry, "if all are like you!"

"But all are not like me!" answered the old woman.

"Thank heaven, I could always defend myself from the best of you!"

After the proof she had so recently given, he must have been incredulous indeed to have doubted it.

There is nothing more natural than that we should feel an interest in watching over the safety of those whom we have once protected.

They seem to have acquired a right to our sympathy and assistance—at least the young artist felt it so; for, from that night, he invariably waited at the stage-door of the Opera House to conduct Sally home; but he was not her only protector, for Mrs. Watkins as regularly despatched her faithful servant to escort her lodger.

Mademoiselle Josephine was furious; her jealousy had brought about the very result she was so anxious to avoid.

When the heart begins to prompt the lips to speak, they are wondrous eloquent; none ever plead so fervently as when urging their first passion. We have often been puzzled to account for this.

Is it that the affections resemble those springs of earth from which the stone which sealed them is suddenly removed—the first gush is the freshest?

Barry and poor Sally loved—the natural consequence of their being thrown so much together.

Little did Meg think, as she walked behind them, night after night, what was the subject of their conversation, or understand why they generally took the longest way to St. Martin's Court.

Love had never disturbed the peaceful current of her existence—she loved only her mistress.

The jealousy of mademoiselle was far more clairvoyant; she, too, had followed them at a distance night after night, her heart burning with envy and bitterness.

Matters had gone on in this way for some time, when one morning the disappointed opera-dancer de-



ascended to the little parlour, her countenance pale with passion, and insisted with so much pertinacity upon seeing Mrs. Watkins, that the old lady was compelled to receive her.

"She was sorry," she said—"very sorry—to complain; but really self-respect would not permit her to keep silence any longer! She had hitherto lived only in respectable houses, and it was really shocking—very—"

At the words "respectable houses," the actress bridled up, and begged her, with great dignity, to explain herself.

The jealous woman muttered something about Mr. Barry's flirtation with a chit like Sally Carroll.

"And what would you have me do?" demanded Mrs. Watkins. "The poor child requires some protection—you refused her yours!"

"No reason," replied mademoiselle, "that she should take up with his! Meg, I should think, is quite sufficient!"

"Doubtless," continued the mistress of the house, in the same polite strain, "the presence of my attendant is sufficient protection; more, it prevents any impropriety in the young gentleman escorting her home!"

"Does it prevent the impropriety of his kissing her in the streets?" exclaimed the jealous woman. "Pah—shocking!"

"Kissing her?"

"Yes—kissing her! I have seen it—Meg has seen it, too!"

"Well!" said the old servant, "and what then—since we both saw it? There could be no great harm in it? If he had kissed you, I'd wager a silver groat you wouldn't have called out 'murder!'"

"Silence, Meg!" interrupted her mistress, with difficulty repressing a smile—for she saw at once that her visitor was devoured by jealousy. "Really," she added, turning to her visitor, "I do not see how I can interfere—such mere children!"

"That," said mademoiselle, "is the worst part of it—so young and so corrupted! Would you believe it, that every morning he visits her in her chamber?"

"I certainly would not believe it!" replied the old lady.

"Nor I!" exclaimed Meg, with whom it was a point of faith to believe and act just as her mistress did.

"More! He is there now—I heard him! I have listened for these three mornings—and, in fact, till I can endure it no longer!"

"This must be seen to," observed the old actress, in one of her most tragic tones, "if it be true!"

"If it be true!" almost screamed the dancer.

"Our own eyes shall judge them!"

So saying, Mrs. Watkins opened the parlour door and began—not without difficulty, for it was a task at her age—to ascend the staircase, followed by her visitor and Meg. When they reached the third floor, she paused for want of breath.

"I can hear them!" whispered the spy, as a low, joyous, musical laugh was heard in the chamber of poor Sally.

The mistress of the house began to look serious. Despite her good opinion of her lodger, it was possible, and yet, with all her knowledge of the world, she could hardly bring her mind to think it.

With a trembling hand, she gently knocked at the door.

"Come in!" cried a cheerful voice.

The old lady gently opened it, and the mystery was explained at a glance. The young artist was there—but the purpose for which he was there was equally obvious:

Upon a canvas stretched upon his easel, he had already sketched a spirited likeness of the old lady as the Duchess of York—her favourite character—and introduced Sally and Fanny as her grandchildren, the infant princes.

It was intended as a surprise for their landlady on her birthday—hence the concealment which had been observed.

Both the girls attempted to hide the picture, exclaiming that she was not to see it till finished.

"My dear Mrs. Watkins," said the painter, rising from his seat, "I could almost have wished the pleasure of showing you my attempt postponed!"

"It's a bad world, my dear children!" answered the venerable woman, the tears standing in her eyes—for she was sensibly touched by the proof of their affection; "a bad world!"

They looked, as they really felt, puzzled to understand her.

"But come, mademoiselle!" she continued; "come and see the proof of your credulity and the poor child's innocence!"

At the word "innocence," Sally blushed deeply. She began to comprehend the cruel suspicions of her rival, who had barred herself in her own chamber, mortified at having displayed her jealousy to so little purpose.

"The vile hussey!" exclaimed the actress, her indignation increasing as she contemplated the portraits, and found that her lodger had really produced from memory a most spirited likeness; "she shall leave my house! I'll have no slanderers here! Don't you think, Mr. Barry," she added, "that if I were to wear my point-lace veil it would have a very good effect?"

"Excellent!" said the young man; "but pardon me, my dear madam—I am anxious for an explanation of something which your very just anger leads me to suspect! We have been slandered, I presume?"

"Most foully!" answered Mrs. Watkins, in a Lady Macbeth-like tone.

"Not," said the gentleman, "if you have been told that we love each other as hearts should love—truly, virtuously. We are both young," he added; "have time before us—I am not without talent—we can afford to wait! Should fortune smile upon my exertions, Sally will be my wife; but till that hour arrives, a sister—a dear, fond sister! May heaven disappoint my every hope in life, if ever a thought of wrong towards her entered my mind!"

"God bless you, my children!" said the actress; "I believe you! She is a good girl, and worthy of you!"

Mademoiselle Josephine, who had heard every word that passed, not knowing what else to do, amused herself by a very clever rehearsal of a fit of hysterics.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

THE cow eats 276 plants and rejects 218; the goat, 449 and 126; the sheep, 387 and 341; the horse, 262 and 212; the hog, 72 and 171.

### CASKET PORTRAITS.

THE report of the Dublin International Exhibition says one of the most curious novelties in the photographic section, is the production of what is called "casket portraits," specimens of which are contributed by Mr. Swan, the inventor. For such a really ingenious, original, and scientific contrivance, it seems that the author might have found a more appropriate name, designating more properly the principles upon which it is based, and the manner of its construction. It is, in fact, neither more nor less than a real stereoscope, in a different form from that well-known instrument.

Without being conscious of it the observer has before his eyes, as in the ordinary stereoscope, a picture composed of two different photographs superposed, each one separately visible to one eye and invisible to the other. These two pictures, placed at right angles on the two sides of two rectangular prisms, with their hypotenuses in contact forming a quadrangular block of glass, are covered to the eye, one from the back surface by refraction, and the other from its hypotenuse by reflexion, after having been refracted upon it by the other prism.

By the optical law of the angle of incidents and reflection, the reflected image is seen only by one eye, the axis of which coincides with the reflected ray, and is invisible to the other eye; and by the law of refraction the other image is seen only by the eye the axis of which coincides with the refracted ray, and is invisible to the other. So that when the observer is placed exactly in the position from which each eye has the exclusive perception of the image, whose perspective belongs thereto, the two images coalesce on the two retinas, and the stereoscopic perception is brought out in all its beauty and force.

The only defect of the apparatus is, that the observer is obliged to find the exact position from which the phenomenon takes place exclusively, and if he lose that position, by the slightest movement of the head, he sees only one or the other image, and there is no illusion of relief, the picture having the flatness of the single photograph which represents it.

Notwithstanding that imperfection, Mr. Swan has succeeded in contriving a most ingenious instrument, which elegantly illustrates a very extraordinary phenomenon of optics.

GRASS CLOTH.—The China grass cloth, *Boehmeria nivea*, is a plant equally as susceptible of cultivation as the sugar-cane, and on similar principles increased readily by seeds and suckers. In rapidity and luxuriance of growth it vies with the rankest tropical weed, and will grow in any soil, but seems to thrive best in a moist climate. So rapid is the growth of this plant, that, by careful observation, the colonial botanist of Jamaica found one of its shoots attain the height of 62 feet in fourteen days, and ultimately 84 feet; but in good land it would exceed this by 2 feet, while in China and the East Indies, where it is highly cultivated, is now makes 8 feet; from which fibre 6 feet long is obtained. This is the plant from the fibre of which is fabricated the finest cloth in the world. It

has also been ascertained to be not only the finest, but the strongest of every fibre submitted to test by the East India Company. This fibre is now beginning to be known in the market, and commands an exorbitant price; on the Continent especially, attention has lately been much drawn to it.

### ON THE FRACTURE OF POLISHED GLASS SURFACES.

THIS short communication which I submit to your notice scarcely merits consideration as a discovery; but as the microscope has in this case immediately detected the cause of a well-known phenomenon, I bring it forward as an example of the use of the instrument in practical investigations.

It is a fact known to the philosophical instrument makers that if a metal wire be drawn through a glass tube, a few hours afterwards the tube will burst into fragments. The annealed glass tubes used for the water-gauges of steam-boilers are sometimes destroyed in this way, after the act of forcing a piece of cotton waste through them with a wire for the purpose of cleaning the bore. This will not happen if a piece of soft wood is employed.

The late Andrew Ross informed me that on one occasion, late in the evening, he lightly pushed a piece of cotton wool through a number of barometer-tubes with a piece of cane, for the purpose of clearing out any particles of dust. The next morning he found most of the tubes broken up into small fragments, the hard siliceous coating of the cane proving as destructive as he had previously known a wire to be.

After having drawn the point of a steel burnisher over the surface of a slip of polished glass, the following appearances will be observed under the microscope, using the polarizing apparatus and selenite plate, with a two-thirds object-glass. A coloured stripe is visible in the passage of the burnisher, showing that the surface of the glass has been placed in a state of tension in the direction of the line. The glass, too, seems not altogether devoid of plasticity, for the waves of colour show that it has been carried forward in ripples, resembling the mark left on a leather-bound book after the passage of a blunt point.

It may be inferred from this that the more burnishing of the surface of the glass with a substance inferior in hardness will, without any scratching, cause an irregular strain in the bore of tubes sufficient to split them, and the concussion attendant upon the fracture often reduces the tube to small fragments. If the burnished lines upon the glass slip be examined a few days afterwards, the colours will have become much less visible, showing that the strained portion of the glass partly recovers its equilibrium.

On attempting to polish out a minute scratch on the surface of a piece of glass, it sometimes appears to widen during the process, and at length resolves itself into two irregular parallel rows.

Also, a clean cut made with a diamond on a piece of plate-glass, if left for a time, the surface in the vicinity of the cut will break up, forming a coarse irregular line. If the diamond be raised and struck lightly on the surface of the glass, the form of the edges of the short stroke thus made may be plainly seen, using the binocular polariscope. A conical ridge of glass appears to be left with its apex under the line of the cut, and the glass is frequently wedged up on both sides of the ridge, explaining the cause of the double line of fracture which sometimes makes its appearance in polishing out a scratch.

This effect may also be exemplified by observing the marks left on a polished glass surface from the light blows of a steel centre-punch. The point of the punch drives in an atom of the glass, and the fracture extends some distance into the interior, expanding downwards in the form of a truncated cone. The polariscope shows that the conical centre is in a state of compression, and that the surrounding exterior portion of the glass is also under strain.

The smooth, round edge of a glazier's diamond, when drawn over a polished glass surface, burnishes down and compresses the glass beneath the cut, and in the case of thin sheets, the wedge-like force of the compressed line splits the glass nearly through; but when the glass is thick and rigid, as plate-glass, unless the sheet is bent back and broken through immediately after the cut, greater difficulty will be experienced if allowed to remain for a time, for the compressed line of glass will speedily tear up the portion on both sides, leaving a wide ragged groove in place of the original clean and scarcely visible line.

F. H. WENHAM.

SPLENDID TRIBUTE TO A MANUFACTURER IN FRANCE.—M. Carrier Belleuse, the French sculptor, who for several years was engaged in the Staffordshire Potteries, has been entrusted with the execution of an allegorical group in bronze and marble, which is to be presented to M. Henri Schneider, of the great iron works at Creusot, by the commercial and work-

ing population of the place (the subscription-list containing more than nine thousand names), on the occasion of the birth of that gentleman's first child. The group is to represent Industry, endowing the world with light, peace, and plenty, and the base will be decorated with three figures, representing Mining, Metallurgy, and Mechanics. The works at Creusot are, perhaps, the most important in France, and well-known to all who are acquainted with engineering on the Continent. After the death of the Comte de Morny, M. G. O. Schneider performed the duties of President of the Assembly with great distinction.

WERE Jupiter to fall into the sun it would evolve by the shock as much heat as the sun would in 82,240 years; and were its rotation stopped by means of a brake, the heat of rotation would be equal to the solar emission for a period of 14 years 144 days. Were the sun itself stopped in the same manner, the emission of heat would equal 116 years 6 days expenditure.

### FACETIE.

If one hornet can make a horse run, how many hornets would it take to make him fly?

THE King of Italy is shooting on the Basses Alpes; his life, it is said, is one eternal round of gunpowder and walking.

THE proper course to pursue, on being informed that somebody has threatened to pull your nose, is to procure a tallow caudle and grease it.

WHY should Chang be insured against hunger?—Because he can always manufacture a "chop."—*Fun.*

A WELL-KNOWN lady *dans le grand monde* was listening to the doleful tale of a dear friend who was complaining of her poverty. "Indeed I do feel for you, my dear," replied mildred, "for I well know what it is to be poor, and to have only one footman."—*Fun.*

### A STRETCHY YARN.

WE were running down from Barbadoes, and the lady passengers were admiring the beautiful flying fish, when one turned to Jack Lacy, who had the wheel, and inquired:

"Jack, do these beautiful fish ever grow any larger?"

"Why, yes, marm. Down there at the Cape Verde, they grow as long as that malmast."

"Indeed! and do they fly, like these?"

"Not 'zactly, marm. They flies longer and higher. Some of 'em fly just like eagles, all day, and more'n two miles high. One day Bill Fawcett was sleepin' up in the foretop, with his dinner port wide open, and one of 'em Cape Verders flew right slap down his throat."

"Why, Jack, that was singular. A fish as long as that malmast flying down a man's throat?"

"Beg pardon, marm, can't talk much at the wheel. I speck Bill must ha' stretched, or else my yarn has."

WE have seen boats at the West that they say can run where there is merely a little dew, but an old fellow out there lately asserted that he had worked on a steamer that when launched did not touch the water by an inch and three-quarters. Such tales almost exceed belief.

AN Irishman having arrived from Dublin at the house of a respectable merchant in the Borough, London, and having left Ireland three weeks before, brought with him a basket of eggs. His friend asked him why he took the trouble to bring eggs from Ireland to England. "Because," said he, "I am fond of them now-laid, and I know these to be so."

THE following is perhaps one of the most laughable incidents that has ever occurred in reference to a locked-up jury!—A Galway bailiff, having been questioned as to whether he had spoken to the jury during the night, gravely answered: "No, my lord; they kept calling out to me to bring them whisky, but I always said, 'Gentlemen of the jury, it's my duty to tell you that I'm sworn not to speak to you.'"

"WHY do you want a berth in a Government office, young man?" once inquired a Minister of State of a lad who was asking a snug post of his lordship. "Simply because I am told that under Government we have the maximum of wages combined with the minimum of work." "Neatly put," replied the good-natured Minister. "Well, we'll see what can be done for you."

HIGH-LEARNED.—An engineer tells the following story of Western life:—"We had been busy during the day running a line through a dense piece of woodland. An old woman gazed on us for some time in silence. We all saw she wanted to enter into conversation; and none, with the exception of myself, wished to gratify her. I soon commenced a dialogue on various subjects and things, and, as a matter of course, I put my best foot forward. Struck with my

language, she exclaimed, in a tone quite flattering to my vanity, 'La, how learned you are!' But the compliment received a death-blow. 'If I was as high-learned as scholar as you,' continued she, 'I'd quit ingeneerin' and go to keepin' a little grocery.'"

### THE YORKSHIREMAN'S VIEW OF TOM THUMB.

A very raw Yorkshireman lately came to town to see General Tom Thumb, his wife, family, &c. He arrived late on the night of the very day that General T. T., his wife, family, &c. had held their last levee. The Yorkshireman was in despair. He had travelled all the way from Roseberry Topping to see General Tom Thumb, and he could not endure his disappointment.

Luckily, he had a letter of introduction to the editor of a London newspaper. He delivered the letter, and prayed the editor, who of course as an editor was all-powerful, to get him a private interview with the General. The editor, anxious to get rid of the young man, pacified him by telling him that he would use his best endeavours.

The editor left his house, and on his way to his office met Mr. Paul Bedford, to whom he related the Yorkshireman's embarrassment.

Paul took the editor by the button-hole and said:

"Dear boy, dear boy: bring him to see me. I'll be General Tom Thumb."

The editor saw the joke, and sent the Yorkshireman to Mr. Paul Bedford's house.

"Is General Tom Thumb at home?" asked the Yorkshireman.

"Yes, sir," said the servant, who immediately ushered him into the portly presence.

The Yorkshireman looked on Mr. Paul Bedford, and Mr. Paul Bedford returned his gaze.

"I beg your pardon!" said the countryman; "there is some mistake. I wished to see General Tom Thumb!"

"I am General Tom Thumb!" said Paul, blandly.

"You?" cried the astonished Yorkshireman.

"Me! Sit down, sit down, dear boy, and take a glass of wine!"

"It is a swindle—a robbery—a do—an imposition!" roared the countryman.

"What is?" asked Paul, innocently.

"You are!" cried the Yorkshireman. "The bills say you are only two feet something high—that you only weigh seventeen pounds."

"No more I do," said Paul, "in public; but I am in private here, at home, and taking my ease."

"And—and your wife and baby?" stammered Roseberry Topping.

"Just now they are out," was the reply, "and therefore of the size and weight described in the programme. No one knows what we public characters go through in our anxiety to gratify our audiences. You see, during our levees, we suffer so much from compression that we are obliged to resort to these means to restore the natural balance."

THE QUEEN.—A fellow, anxious to see the Queen, left his native village and came to London to gratify his curiosity. Upon his return, his wife asked him, "What the Queen was like." "Loike!" cried Hobble. "Why, I never was so cheated in my life. What don't think, Margaret? her arms are like thoine and moine; although I have heard exchequer say a score of times her arms were 'a lion and a unicorn.'"

A COUNTRY gentleman, while strolling out with a Cockney friend—a genuine Cockney—approached a meadow, in which was standing a crop of hay. The Cockney gazed at it wonderingly. It wasn't grass, it wasn't wheat—it wasn't turnip-tops. "Vy, vatever does you call this stuff?" said he to his companion. "That—why, hay, to be sure!" was the reply. "Hay! he, he! come, that's cutting it a little too thick! If that's hay, just show me the hay-corns—come, now!"

### A RARE THING.

Bore: "What I admire in you mostly, Miss Madeline, is your wit."

Young Lady: "That, sir, is also the most valuable of your qualities."

Bore: "How so? You flatter me."

Young Lady (sarcastically): "Oh no, sir; a thing is valuable from its rarity."

POET CLOSE.—The "poet" Close has been lecturing in Carlisle, to the great amusement of a moderate audience. The text of his discourse was in effect the advantage of buying his compositions. He related many anecdotes of men of mark he had encountered. Of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he informed the audience that his Grace corresponded with the poet and got all his books—'and he pays for them like a man,' added the poet, with evident satisfaction. Bishop Percy, of Carlisle, however, had been an exception to that sweeping rule. Bishop Percy sent for him to the King's Arms, at Kirby Stephen, and he respected Bishop Percy—not because he gave him a sovereign; he never looked at money, oh, no! but he

liked a gentleman who had sympathy for the Poet Close. Bishop Percy put down a sovereign upon the table; the poet put the sovereign in his pocket: "Not because it was a sovereign—do the poet justice!—but it was because it was a bishop's sovereign; he had never seen a bishop's sovereign before, and he did not believe he ever should do so again."

RATHER keen and suggestive was a repartee made the other evening by a little fellow in a barber's shop. A gentleman of standing, and an owner in one of the factories, came in, and, impatient at being delayed while the two boys had their hair cut, remarked that "little boys ought to get their hair out in the daytime, and go to bed in the evening." "Yes," replied one of the juveniles; "but little boys who get up in the morning at five o'clock, and work in the mill till seven at night, must get their hair cut when they can."

A STUDENT who was declaiming vigorously, and, he doubtless believed, eloquently, on "The Language of Man," burst forth with—"The indispensable contributions of the inferior members of the animal kingdom to our noble language, and—" but here his tutor stopped him, and satirically requested an explanation of the "indispensable contributions" referred to. Whereupon the student, without being at all abashed, at once replied: "They may be found, sir, in such words as *dog-matism, cat-echism, cronology, pus-illanimous, duc-tility, hen-pecked, ox-tygen, cow-slip, as-teroid, and rat-ification.*"

A MISNOMER.—A new omnibus has made its appearance under the name of "The Volunteer." We cast a glance inside the other day, and there we saw—a dozen pressed men!—*Fun.*

### VERY CONSIDERATE INDEED.

Cobby (to passenger who has complained of the pace): "Slow, sir? Yes, sir. But, you see, the fact is 'a've a-been in the Undertakin', but giv' up through redooed suckumstances, and I really 'aven't the heart to 'urry 'im."—*Fun.*

LITERARY MEM.—We learn from a contemporary that a new magazine is to be started called the *Tory*. Judging from the fate of its predecessors in the same line, it had better be called the *Transi-tory*.—*Fun.*

### SOMETHING LIKE A CELEBRITY.

Operator: "See that gen'l'man, sir, a-brushin' of 'is air? Extraw'nary man, sir! Wonderful genius, sir!"

Patient: "Indeed! Who is he?"

Operator (mysteriously): "That sir! That is *Our Poet*!"—*Fun.*

NARROW ESCAPE.—The Duke of Sutherland fired up the other day. We have since heard that His Grace was put out by a freeman.—*Punch.*

### GALLANT, BUT WE FEAR SATIRICAL OFFICER.

Advanced Young Lady: "Will you take a cigarette, Captain de Robynsone?"

Captain: "Thanks, no! I have not learned to smoke yet. But pray go on; smoke does not make me at all ill—I rather like it!"—*Punch.*

FEDERAL DIET.—What is the Diet of those small Germans who, having been used as cat's paws, and deceived; are now bullied and insulted by Prussia and Austria?—Truly the present diet of Germany is Humble Pie.—*Punch.*

A RULE FOR RAILWAY TRAVELLING.—"Will you allow me, sir, to offer you a cigar?"—"Thank you, but I never smoke."—"Have you any objection to my lighting one, sir?"—"Oh! no, none in the least." This plan is infallible with the most Puritanical-looking fellow-traveller. Never think of putting the second question first. The production of the cigar, and the generous offer, are sure to disarm all crusty objections. Try it.—*Punch.*

LORD PALMERSTON'S BISHOPS AND DEANS.—The following bishops and deans were appointed by Lord Palmerston:—Hon. and Rev. Montague Villiers, Bishop of Carlisle, 1855; Durham, 1861; died, 1862; Dr. Baring, Bishop of Gloucester, 1856; elevated to Durham, 1862; Dr. Tait, Bishop of London, 1856; Dr. Bickersteth, Bishop of Ripon, 1856, vice Dr. Longley, promoted to Durham; Hon. and Rev. Dr. Pelham, Bishop of Norwich, 1857; Dr. Wigram, Bishop of Rochester, 1860 (Dr. Vaughan having declined); Hon. and Rev. Dr. Waldegrave, Bishop of Carlisle, 1860; Dr. Thomson, Bishop of Gloucester, 1861; promoted to York, 1862; Dr. Elliott, Bishop of Gloucester, 1861; Dr. H. Browne, Bishop of Ely, 1864; Dr. Jeune, Bishop of Peterborough, 1864; Dr. Jacobson, Bishop of Chester, 1865. Lord Palmerston's appointments, include, therefore, twelve bishops made in ten years, of whom eleven survive. His lordship also filled the provincial sees of Canterbury and York by the promotion of Dr. Longley and Dr. Thomson. Dr. Longley was consecrated Bishop of



Ripon in 1836 by Lord Melbourne, advanced by Lord Palmerston first to Durham in 1856, and then to Canterbury in 1862. The following is a list of Lord Palmerston's deans:—Dr. Close, Dean of Carlisle, 1856; Dr. Alford, Dean of Canterbury, 1857; Dr. Trench, Dean of Westminster, 1857; Dr. Garner, Dean of Ripon, 1858; promoted to Lincoln, 1860, and died 1864; Dr. Good, Dean of Ripon, 1860; Dr. Henry Law, Dean of Gloucester, 1862; Hon. Viscount Middleton, Dean of Exeter, 1862; Dr. Jeune (now Bishop of Peterborough), Dean of Lincoln, 1864; Dr. Jeremie, Dean of Lincoln, 1864. Dr. Stanley was also appointed Dean of Westminster whilst Lord Palmerston was Premier in 1864. There have been, therefore, thirteen English mitres and thirteen English deaneries given away since March, 1855, but of those one mitre and three deaneries fell to Lord Derby. After making allowance for deaths and promotions, there remain eleven out of twenty-eight sees now filled by bishops of Lord Palmerston's selection, and (excluding Westminster as special) there are six out of the twenty-five deaneries in the patronage of the Crown filled by deans of the late lamented Premier's selection.

### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

THE extreme heat which prevailed on the Continent during the vintage produced a curious result. The grapes being in general very ripe, fermented in the vats with extraordinary rapidity. A great portion of the saccharine matter had not time to be converted into alcohol, and the wine, on account of the saccharine matter remaining in it, will ferment for a long time in the cask.

#### THE PROPER WAY TO DEAL WITH BULBS.

As soon as any bulb shows signs of growth, the sap has begun its seasonal movements, and it needs the support of nutriment obtained by the roots. Therefore the first act of the sap, when its autumnal movement commences, should be the formation of roots; therefore, also, it should come in contact with moist earth, before the movement of the sap commences, in order that when the roots begin to protrude from the base of the bulb, they may be in contact with the soil, which is the only natural medium for their growth and usefulness.

What should we say of a propagator of roses who should put in cuttings, and at once drive them into growth by atmospheric heat and moisture, without waiting till they had callused and began to form root fibres? We should say he had adopted a killing process, and had better buy roses ready rooted than attempt to obtain them in such a ridiculous fashion.

But this is the way the greater part of autumn-planted bulbs are dealt with. They arrive in this country in fine condition of ripeness, and begin to sprout in the warehouses and seedsmen's windows long before the public think of making purchases. They form incipient roots at the base, and plump green shoots at the crown, and these succulent growths are elaborated at expense of the sap in the bulb, and, by the process of transpiration, the atmosphere sucks the life out of them, through the tissues of incipient roots and plump green shoots.

When planted, they have to make roots at the expense of the already exhausted bulb, and then have to recover from those roots sap to sustain the growth above the bulb, which is already in advance of the roots in its stage of development; and thus the balance between supply below and exhaustion above is never restored, and the second season after purchase the bulbs are fit only for the muck-heap.

The laws of vegetable physiology plainly point out that all the hardy bulbs which sprout in autumn should be in the ground before that effort is begun. The equable temperature of the soil, and its moist condition at six inches below the surface, provide the very best conditions possible for promoting immediate root-action, and retarding the growth of the foliage—two desirable results, both for the bloom in the spring following and for the preservation and increase of the stock.

**OLD AGE.**—In Dublin there is the finest specimen of a great old man still acute and clear-headed in all the world. Chief Justice Leffroy will attain his 90th birthday next year. May the venerable and incorrupt judge live to the age of *la Vieille Puignere*, a well-known centenarian of Limousin, who has just died in her 110th year. This woman's name was Catherine Bernard, born early in 1786, or before George the Third came to the English throne. She was married twice, and had to pay the sad penalty of those left to linger in this world beyond the ordinary three-score or three-score and ten. Both her husbands died before her, and she mourned for all her children, her sons and her daughters, as well as for her sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. Her last child died four years ago

—her youngest—a youth of eighty years! "The poor lad was only eighty," as the old woman said sorrowfully at the time, looking round for sympathy. Of all her descendants, who were at one time very numerous, only three survive, a grandson and two great-grandsons. The old woman was never sick in her life until about two months ago, when she was attacked with paralysis. This affected an intellect which for so great an age had been singularly clear up to that time; still she continued to sleep and eat well, and passed out of the world without the slightest apparent suffering, like a sleeping infant.

#### THE THREE WHITE CUPS.

A little off the Hampstead line,  
And fronting to the Norwood chaise,  
There stands an old house with the sign  
Of Three White Cups—it is a place  
That you have never seen, perhaps,  
And yet the traveller resting there  
Will always find the Three White Cups  
Affording him the daintiest fare.  
And sweet that night will be his sleep,  
Who at his wise bespeaks a bed,  
His pillows being like a heap  
Of daisies underneath his head.

Sweet, but not sound—his dream will take  
One haunting shape, and only one;  
Boughs full of flowers he cannot break  
Will hang above him in the sun;  
And winds, as on their way they go,  
Will see him looking, longing stand,  
But not a wanton breath will blow  
A single blossom to his hand!  
And when the mocking vision stops,  
And morning wakes him with its gleam,  
The hostess of the Three White Cups,  
I think, will mind him of his dream.

A. C.

#### GEMS.

**SELF-DENIAL** is the most exalted pleasure, and the conquest of evil habits the most glorious triumph. It has been beautifully said that the veil which covers the face of futurity is woven by the hand of mercy.

WERE we to take as much pains to be what we ought to be, as we do to disguise what we really are, we might appear like ourselves, without being at the trouble of any disguise at all.

WITH a double vigilance should we watch our actions, when we reflect that good and bad ones are never childless; and that in both cases, the offspring goes beyond the parent—every good begetting a better, every bad a worse.

It is all very well for prosperous men to prate of the vices of their unfortunate brethren. A clock that marks the most exact time will, if you tilt it the least on one side, go all wrong, or suddenly stop going at all.

THERE are minds so habituated to intrigue and mystery in themselves, and so prone to expect it from others, that they will never accept of a plain reason for a plain fact, if it be possible to devise causes for it that are obscure, far-fetched, and usually not worth the carriage.

**DINNER TO LORD BYRON'S BOOTMAKER.**—A dinner has just been given by Mr. Henry Swift, of Southwell (Notts), in celebration of his father and mother having attained the sixtieth year of their married life, their united ages amounting to 173 years. Presents of game were forwarded by several ladies and gentlemen. For nearly sixty years Mr. William Swift was a respected tradesman of Southwell, and he had been bootmaker to the late Lord Byron, whose lasts a few years ago he presented to the museum at Nottingham.

**DEER-FORESTS & SHEEP-RUNS.**—Mr. Horatio Ross, writing on this subject, says: "A deer-forest, when fully stocked, will produce quite as great a weight of venison as it would of mutton. This venison is not wasted or thrown away—it is either sold, given away, or consumed by the establishment of the proprietor or tenant of the deer-forest; and as people can only eat a certain quantity of animal food, it supplies the place of beef and mutton to the amount of its own weight. Where one shepherd sufficed to attend to the sheep, fully three men are required in a deer-forest. In addition, gillies for the season are employed, poises engaged, and a great deal of money spent amongst the poor, not one farthing of which would ever have reached their pockets if their lands

had been pastured by sheep. Besides, in almost all deer-forests it is the habit to give away amongst the poor a good deal of venison. With regard to the weight of food in the shape of venison which may be got from a deer-forest, I may mention that thirteen years ago I cleared the farms of Glenbiddle and Corrie Valigan of sheep, and converted the hills into a deer-forest. There were eleven hundred sheep on the ground when I took a lease of the grazings. Not being a practical sheep-farmer, I do not like to make a positive statement as to the weight of mutton which this stock—it was an awe stock—might be expected on an average of years to supply to the public. I, however, doubt if it would have exceeded the weight of venison which the forest produced last season. We killed seventy stags—these deer averaged exactly 13 st. 2 lb. each, or 920 st. of wholesome animal food. We left the forest in the middle of October. If we had remained until the first of December, we might have killed, in addition to the stags, fully thirty hinds, whose average weight would have been at least 7 st. 7 lb. each, or 225 st. of venison. Of the seventy stags killed, I gave to my friends and distributed amongst the poor in the neighbourhood (by far the largest share went to the poor) fifty-five stags—equal to 722 st. of animal food; or, taking the weight of a black-faced sheep at 56 lb., equal to one hundred and eighty sheep."

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

A PENSION has been granted to the family of the ex-King of Delhi.

THE ancient silver penny was marked in the form of a cross, and thus was easily broken into a half-penny and farthing.

LETTERS from Smyrna report that the cattle disease is committing great ravages in that neighbourhood, and that it has attacked the camels.

THE law courts of Lyons and Colmar have decided that the *particule de* placed before one's name is not a sign of nobility, and that therefore anyone may use it, whether he is a noble or not.

THE Cardiganshire mines yielded, in the time of Charles I., 80 oz. of silver in every ton of lead, and part of the king's army was paid with this silver, which was minted at Suresbury.

THE Garden of Acclimatization has just received a hen ostrich fifteen months old, bred at Grenoble, and four chickens hatched at Algiers. The ostriches in domestic life are quite farmyard birds; they lay, sit, and bring up their young like ordinary fowls.

AMONG the many posts of honour held by Lord Palmerston was that of the Master of the Trinity House. We understand that this post will be offered to the Prince of Wales. It was held by the Prince Consort.

SIR HUGH MYDDLETON is said to have cleared £2,000 per month from the silver obtained from his lead mines in Cardiganshire, and to have been enabled thereby to undertake the great work of bringing the New River from Ware to London.

LIEUT.-COLONEL THE HON. H. C. LOWTHER, by Lord Palmerston's death, becomes the Father of the House of Commons. He is next brother to the Earl of Lonsdale, and has represented the county of Westmoreland without interruption since 1812.

It has been ordered at Moscow that in all public buildings the doors of the main entrances shall open outwards, instead of, as hitherto, inwards. The reason of this arrangement is to enable people to have free egress in the event of any accident or panic occurring.

It is thought probable that, inasmuch as both Lord Palmerston and his brother, Sir William Temple, died childless, the Viscount will be conferred upon the eldest surviving son of Lady Palmerston, the Hon. William F. Cowper, First Commissioner of Works.

A NEW lake has just been discovered in the Sierra Nevada mountains, some five miles from Donner Lake, by the surveying party of the Central Pacific Railroad. It was named Lake Angela, after Miss Angela Starr King, who happened to be sojourning at the Donner water. The ceremony of christening was accompanied by a festival and dinner.

PARIS EXHIBITION.—The following circular has been issued by the Science and Art Department, South Kensington:—"Notice to Intending Exhibitors in the Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867.—Although the 28th February, 1866, has been fixed as the last day for receiving demands for space, intending exhibitors are requested not to delay forwarding such demands, but to send them as soon as possible. By order of the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education, South Kensington Museum, October, 1865."

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FRED C.—We beg to decline with thanks the lines on "Lord Palmerston," which reached us too late.

MELLAR STREET.—The popular *equivoque* in question is an American; but we cannot reply to your other queries.

HELEN WINTLEY.—Cleanliness, i.e., soap and water—is an infallible recipe in both cases.

A. S.—An action for breach of promise may be supported on verbal and general evidence, and also by the tenor of any correspondence that may have taken place.

G. D.—The communication will be considered as quite confidential; and the request be attended to, should opportunity offer.

GEORGE HARRY D.—The "pitting" marks left by small-pox are ineradicable. The handwriting is good, and well adapted for any business occupation.

WALTER F., who is twenty years of age, 5 ft 3 in. in height, dark, and very good looking, is desirous of meeting with a young lady, twenty years of age, or younger, and thoroughly domesticated, willing to venture on matrimony with him.

C. M. C.—The episode of Italian life is very fairly narrated, and its treatment gives promise of considerable literary ability; but the subject too fragmentary, and the *feuilleton* is therefore declined, with many thanks.

ARTHUR WILLIAM RYBRO.—Your first question is one which we could not reasonably be expected to answer publicly. To the other we reply that your handwriting is tolerably good.

A. C. R.—The valiant hair dye (for the receipt for which we gave in a recent number) may be applied with a sponge or a hair brush, the hair being properly washed and cleaned previously.

L. B.—A respectable tradesman's son, twenty-five years of age, with light brown hair and blue eyes, is 5 ft 10 in. in height, and tolerably good-looking, would like to correspond matrimonially with a brunette about twenty years of age.

LONELY ROSE would like to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman. In twenty years of age, very prepossessing in appearance, having auburn hair, hazel eyes, and fresh complexion, is very good tempered, and respectfully connected.

NELLY S., who is just eighteen years of age, tall, of fair complexion, with blue eyes and brown hair, would like to correspond with a gentleman, who must be tall, well educated, and possess an income of £200 a year.

FRED B.—The first marriage being legally performed, the fact of its having been kept secret from the relations of both parties would not invalidate it; and nothing further is legally necessary.

ANNIE LEE, who is to her eighteenth year; rather tall, with brown hair and hazel eyes, desires to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman in a respectable position, who must be tall, and really gentlemanly in appearance.

S. O. S.—The name "Minorces" is derived from the name of a convent founded in the locality in 1293, for the reception of ladies of the Order of St. Clare, and called the Convent of the Minorces. This name was afterwards corrupted into Minorces.

BECKY, who is seventeen years of age, of medium height, very dark, with grey eyes and dark hair, and is very amiable, wishes with a view to matrimony, to correspond with a gentleman, who must be tall and dark, not more than twenty-five years of age, and in good circumstances.

DESPERADO is desirous of opening a matrimonial correspondence with a gentleman (fair preferred). Is twenty-four years of age, domesticated, though fond of society, tall and fair, with full blue eyes, black hair, a good complexion, and a merry and affectionate disposition.

ANNA and LIZZY, sisters, would like to correspond matrimonially with two gentlemen. "Anna" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft 3 in. in height, of fair complexion, and considered good-looking. "Lizzy" is twenty years of age, 5 ft 2 in. in height, fair complexion, and considered good-looking, and both are thoroughly domesticated.

ANNIE and MARY are willing to receive matrimonial overtures. "Annie" is twenty years of age, of medium height, with fair complexion, black hair and blue eyes, and is inclined to *embroider*; "Mary" is nineteen years of age, rather above the medium height, with fair complexion, light brown hair, and blue eyes.

C. S. W., who is 5 ft 2 in. in height, of fair complexion, with auburn hair, and dark brown eyes, wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence with a gentleman about twenty years of age; good looks not absolutely essential—good moral principles being preferred—and a tradesman not objected to.

CHARLES and WILLIE, feeling the discomforts of single life, long for partners, who would not only combine grace and elegance with general domesticity, but also prove loving, confiding, and affectionate wives. "Charles" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft 10 in. in height, with dark hair and

eyes, slight moustache, and is very good tempered, well connected, and in receipt of £170 per annum. The lady should have fair hair, and be not more than twenty-one years of age. "Willie" is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft 9 in. in height, with auburn hair; is very good tempered, and has large whiskers, and moustache, and would prefer a young lady with dark hair.

MISS ELIZABETH and CAROLINE will be pleased to entertain matrimonial overtures from two gentlemen. The former is twenty-two years of age, of medium height, with fair complexion, blue eyes, and dark brown hair. The latter is eighteen years of age, of medium height, inclined to *embroider*, with fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair.

HARRIET C. and JENNY E. would like to correspond with two respectable tradesmen (if dark and tall preferred). "Harriet C." is eighteen years of age, of fair complexion, with dark eyes and brown curly hair. "Jenny E." is eighteen years of age, with dark complexion, black curly hair, and black eyes.

A BACHELOR, thirty-five years of age, 5 ft 10 in. in height, with dark brown hair and whiskers, a manufacturer with a moderate income, desires to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes de visite* with a respectable business lady from twenty-five to thirty years of age, and possessing some means.

MYRTLE, who is of medium height, with blue eyes, and wavy golden hair, wishes to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with a young gentleman, tall, handsome, clever, and possessing sufficient means to keep a wife in good style. "Myrtle" is of a good family, and considered highly accomplished.

IVY, a young lady of very good family, and fully accomplished, of medium height, with hazel eyes and auburn hair, desires to form a matrimonial alliance with a young gentleman of fortune, who must be tall (but personal beauty a secondary consideration to beauty of mind), be possessed of a cultivated intellect and a gentlemanly address.

## BEAUTY AND LOVE.

They used to call me beautiful!

I had nothing else beside!

There was none more great or wise than he

In all the world so wide!

And it's still a sort of pleasure,

Very mournful thought it be,

To know he once could think such thoughts.

And write such words to me!

But my poor beauty faded—

'Twas the only gift I had;

I was always weak and foolish,

And my whole life grew vain;

For the cruel blighting fever

Left me pliant to fate—

Oh! it is true that "beauty's fleeting!"

And my love no more loved me!

OTOMAN, who is nineteen years of age, 5 ft 10 in. in height, with dark brown hair and whiskers, as eyes of same colour, would be happy to contract a matrimonial engagement with a young lady from about seventeen to nineteen years of age, who must not object to at least three years courtship. Good looks of no consideration.

ISAAC and JILL would be happy to correspond matrimonially with two young gentlemen, who must be tall and dark, and passably good looking. "Isaac" is tall and commanding in figure, with fair complexion, dark hair, and black eyes. "Jill" is petite and fair, with golden hair and blue eyes. Both have good expectations, and are considered pretty.

MARY, who is between twenty-five and twenty-six years of age, tall, inclined to *embroider*, of fair complexion, with dark auburn hair, neither pretty nor plain domesticated, fond of music, good tempered, of a home-loving disposition, and possessed of some property, will be glad to receive matrimonial overtures from a gentleman about thirty years of age, tall, fond of home, and a Protestant.

EMMA and MIRABELLE wish to correspond with two young gentlemen, who must be dark and handsome. "Emma" is eighteen years of age, of medium height, has dark brown hair, grey eyes, and is considered pretty. "Mirabelle" is nineteen years of age, of medium height, has brown hair and hazel eyes. Both expect fortunes on coming of age, and are amiable and domesticated.

ROSAMUND MARRIAGE, who is seventeen years of age, tall (in appearance resembling the Princess of Wales), with brown curly hair, and very expressive hazel eyes, is highly educated, accomplished, and possesses a fortune, is desirous of receiving a matrimonial *bulletin* from some highly educated, handsome gentleman, of about twenty-five years of age, dark and good looking, of military figure, and possessed of adequate means.

G. R. W. and O. K. G. wish to correspond with two young gentlemen, who must be tall and good looking, and of good birth. "G. R. W." is eighteen years of age, 5 ft 2 in. in height, with dark brown hair and light grey eyes, is accomplished, and the only daughter of a retired tradesman.

"O. K. G." who is eighteen years of age, 4 ft 9 in. in height, of fair complexion, with light blue eyes and brown hair, is accomplished, and the daughter of a very respectable tradesman.

LOUIE and GIBBY are desirous of corresponding with two gentlemen between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-six, who must be tall, and have a moderate income. "Louie" is in her eighteenth year, 5 ft 14 in. in height, has dark brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, and slight figure; is domesticated, and sings well. "Gibby" is in her seventeenth year, is 5 ft 1 in. in height, with brown wavy hair, hazel eyes, Grecian features, clear complexion, is petite in figure, merry in disposition, thoroughly domesticated, and a good musician.

ADA MAY and LOTTIE SINGLARS would be happy to enter into a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen. "Ada" is twenty-two years of age, tall, and very genteel looking, with dark hair and eyes, amiable, very domesticated, and would prefer a fair gentleman with blue eyes, tall, good tempered, and twenty-five years of age. "Lottie" who is twenty years of age, fair, and rather pretty, with blue eyes, and has a small fortune, prefers a dark gentleman, handsome, with pleasing manners and twenty-two years of age.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

C. H. O. will be happy to exchange addresses, &c. with "Myra," with a view to a matrimonial engagement.

P. B. D. requests the *carte de visite* of "T. D." as a possible preliminary to a matrimonial correspondence.

A. H. F. wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence and exchange *cartes*, &c. with "Marian F."

IRAXA, thinking she should not hear any further from "Paul Dumant," notifies that she has consequently formed an engagement with a gentleman in her native town.

EDWIS J. would like to hear further from "M. F." to whom he begs to offer himself. Is nineteen years of age, 5 ft 7 in. in height, fair, and passably good looking.

A. H. will be happy to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Alphonso D. D." a widower, with a view to matrimony. Is thirty-eight years of age, of genteel appearance, amiable in disposition, and very domesticated.

G. B. J. would very much like to correspond matrimonially with "S. E. M." Is fair, of middle height, amiable, and domesticated. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged as a preliminary.

ONE WHO PREFERS A BRUNETTE, states in reply to "Ella" that he is twenty-eight years of age, and of fair complexion, has just commenced business as a goldsmith and jeweller, and would be glad to exchange *cartes* as a preliminary.

F. H., who is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft 7 in. in height, with dark brown hair, grey eyes, fair complexion, and very good expectations, would be most happy to hear matrimonially from "M. F." (No. 126).

FREDERICK CHAUCER and HIS BROTHER, who both are professional men, good looking, and thirty and twenty-five years of age respectively, would like to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Ella" and "Alice."

ALBERT, who is a gentleman, twenty years of age, of fair complexion, and has blue eyes, will be most happy to exchange *cartes* and correspond with either "Fanny" or "Agnes."

G. would like to correspond with "Lizzie." Is thirty-one years of age, 5 ft 3 in. in height, in a profession, has only a very small income at present. He merely stipulates that the lady should possess intelligence and good temper.

L. R. thinks that "Louise" is just the lady to make him a suitable wife. Is twenty years of age, 5 ft 7 in. in height, and on the death of a relative will be in possession of an annual income.

C. L., a tradesman's son, would like to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Agnes." Is twenty years of age, 5 ft 7 in. in height, with brown hair and eyes, and considered passably good looking.

JOHN B., who is nineteen years of age, tall, of dark complexion, considered good looking, and very respectfully connected, would like to correspond with "Alice," with a view to matrimony.

J. M. D., who is twenty-five years of age, 5 ft 8 in. in height, light blue eyes and brown hair, is highly respectable, and in moderately good circumstances, would be happy to hear from either "Mary" or "Maggie," and would willingly exchange *cartes*.

B. S. and F. P., twenty and twenty-one years of age respectively, both of whom are of respectable families, hold good mercantile positions, and are good looking, would be most happy to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Ella" and "Alice."

ISABELLA MACO would be happy to hear from "Horace P." with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft 2 in. in height, with brown hair, blue eyes, rather pale complexion, a good temper, and an affectionate disposition; is also very domesticated, and has a yearly income.

FRANCES ASKE would be happy to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with "Uncomfortable" or "Belphégor." Is twenty-nine years of age, 5 ft 5 in. in height, with dark brown hair, blue eyes, is good tempered, very domesticated, and has a small fortune besides a yearly income.

EDWARD S. will exchange *cartes* with either "Fanny" or "Agnes," and can give every satisfaction as regards character, family and means, and should require the same; has property, independent of business, and hopes that there may be some forthcoming also on the lady's side.

A. P. W. will be most happy to hear from "Ella" or "Alice," if still engaged. Is twenty-three years of age, with a good income, is considered good looking, and of an affectionate disposition, highly respectable, and moves in good society; is steady, accomplished, and a good singer.

FREDERICK A. L. responds to "Helen" that he is twenty years of age, good looking, 5 ft 7 in. in height, has a comfortable competency at present and good expectations; is educated and accomplished, and will be happy to exchange *cartes*.

L. M. would like to exchange *cartes* with "T. D." Is seventeen years of age, considered very handsome, and aristocratic in manners, has dark brown hair, large grey eyes, and slight figure, is of very good family, and an excellent musician.

ORANGE BLOSSOM requests the *carte de visite* of "T. D." being quite fascinated with the description he has given of himself. "Orange Blossom" is just nineteen years of age, petite, very ladylike and prepossessing in appearance, good tempered, vivacious, warm-hearted, and passionately fond of music, but cannot play. (Handwriting of average merit).

ACTIE thinks she would make a good and loving wife either to "T. D." or "J. L." Is eighteen years of age, considered a pretty brunette, 5 ft 5 in. in height, has been well educated, and is thoroughly domesticated; is passionately fond of music and singing, and is considered a pretty good musician; is co-heiress to a neat little fortune. *Carte de visite* requested as a preliminary.

PAUL XXX., FOR NOVEMBER IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

\* NOW READY, VOL. V. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. V. Price ONE PENNY.

\* N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON READER.

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**BRADEN'S HOUSEHOLD TEA, 3s.** Pleasant flavour, abundant strength; 6lb. case, 18s., carriage free to all England.—**ALEXANDER BRADEN, 13, High Street, Islington, London.**

**WHY GIVE MORE?**—Excellent TEAS, black, green, and mixed, are now ON SALE, for family use, at 2s. 4d. per lb. at **NEWSOM and CO'S. Original Tea Warehouse, 50, Borough. Established A.D. 1745.**

**THE LONDON LOOKING-GLASS COMPANY'S FIVE-GUINEA LOOKING-GLASS.** Several new designs now ready.—**A. JENKINS and CO., 167, Fleet Street, and 1, New Road, Brighton. New Design Book free, post-paid.**

**ALLSOPP'S PALE ALE.**—The **OCTOBER BREWINGS** of the above ALE are now being supplied, in the finest condition, in bottles and in casks, by **FINDLATER, MACKIE, TODD, and CO.,** at their New London Bridge Stores, London Bridge, S.E.

**EVANS'S PRIZE KITCHENER.**—This Matchless Kitchen obtained a prize at the Exhibition of 1862. It is adapted for the cottage or mansion, from £4 15s. to £30. Also larger sizes for hotels, taverns, private and public schools, and hospitals, with steam apparatus, from £50 to £100 and upwards. Show-rooms, 33 and 34, King William Street, London Bridge. Manufactory, 10, Arthur Street West, adjoining.

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**GREY HAIR.**—248, High Holborn, London.—**ALEX. ROSS'S** charges for dyeing the hair—Ladies', from 7s. 6d.; gentlemen's, from 6s. The dye is sold at 3s. 6d., and sent by post for 54 stamps. Any shade produced.

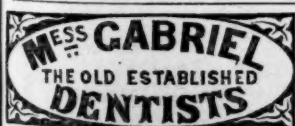
**SPANISH FLY** is the acting ingredient in **ALEX. ROSS'S CANTHARIDES OIL**, which produces whickers and thickens hair. Sold at 3s. 6d., 5s. 6d., and 10s. 6d.; or per post, 54, 84, or 144 stamps.—**A. ROSS, 248, High Holborn.**

**ALEX. ROSS'S DESTROYER** of HAIR removes superfluous hair from the face without the slightest effect to the skin, 3s. 6d., or per post for 54 stamps. **ROSS'S TOILET MAGAZINE**, 1d., monthly; had of all booksellers; or for two stamps.—248, High Holborn, London.

**FELIX SULTANA'S GOLDEN CASSETTE**, which unceasingly emits a delightful fragrance, 1s. The Fairy Fountain, six different perfumes, in boxes, 1s. Queen Dagmar's Cross, a jewel for a lady's neck, deliciously perfumed, 5s. 6d. A bottle of Jockey Club, Wood Violet, and Kiss Me Quick, in case, 4s. 6d. Genuine Otto of Roses, in original bottles, 3s. 6d. All sent free.—**FELIX SULTANA, Royal perfumer, 28, Poultry City, and 210, Regent Street, London.**

**FRY'S HOMOEOPATHIC COCOA**, in Packets.—The purity, delicacy of flavour, and nutritious properties of this Cocoa, as well as the great facility with which it is made, have rendered it a standard article of general consumption. It is highly approved and strongly recommended by medical men, and is equally adapted for invalids and general consumers.—**J.S. FRY and SONS, Bristol and London, are the only English Manufacturers of Cocoa who obtained the Prize Medal, 1862.**

**HOLLOWAY'S PILLS.**—The causes of dysentery in hot climates and diarrhoea in our own country may be safely counteracted by the purifying agency of these well-known pills. Within these few years the chance of escape from a dangerous disease was only by taking dangerous remedies; now the malady is dispelled by general purification of the blood, and its regenerating influence over every organ. Thus the very means for overcoming the sighing, vomiting, cramps, and straining include the elements of new strength. Holloway's Pills are admirable tonics and astringents, and can be confidently relied upon. Whatever may have immediately given rise to the irritation of the bowels, these pills soothe the irritated membranes and repress the excessive excitability of the intestines.



**TEETH.**—Osteo Eidon, Messrs. Gabriel's Specialite.—The numerous advantages, such as comfort, purity of materials, economy, and freedom from pain, obtainable hereby, are explained in Messrs. Gabriel's Pamphlet on the Teeth, just published, free by post, or gratis on application.  
27, Harley-street, Cavendish-square, and 34, Ludgate-hill, London; Liverpool, 134, Duke-street; Birmingham, 65, New-street.  
Complete Sets, 4 to 7 and 19 to 16 guineas.

**RIMMEL'S NEW PERFUME, CUPID'S TEARS,** in a pretty moire-antique box, 3s. 6d.—**E. RIMMEL, 96, Strand, 128, Regent Street, and 24, Cornhill, London.** Just published, "Rimmel's Book of Perfume," with above 250 illustrations. Price 5s. Sent by post for 68 stamps.

**PROFESSOR STANLEY.** Hair Cutter and Hair Dyer, 46, Blackfriars Road, S. (12 doors from the Railway Station). Hair Cut and Brushed by Machinery, 3d.; Cut, Shampooed (with hot and cold showers), and Brushed by Machinery, 6d. No business on Sundays.

**POWNCEBY'S FRENCH BRANDY,** at 4s. 6d. per bottle, is confidently recommended. Dr. Hassall's report: "The French brandies sold by Mr. Pownceby are a pure grape spirit, and valuable for medicinal purposes."—**S. POWNCEBY, 19, Ernest Street, Albany Street, N.W.** Samples forwarded.

**CADIZ, OPORTO, and LIGHT WINE ASSOCIATION (Limited).**—Capital, £150,000.—West-end Depot, 434, Strand. Sample bottles of the following WINES, direct from Vineyards; Dinner Sherry, 18s.; sample bottle, 1s. 8d. Household Port, 18s.; sample bottle, 1s. 8d. Club Sherry, 36s.; sample bottle, 3s. 2d. Club Port, 36s.; sample bottle, 3s. 2d.

**COLMAN'S PRIZE MEDAL MUSTARD** bears their trade mark, the Bull's Head, on each package. It is the only mustard which obtained a Prize Medal at the Great Exhibition, 1862; their "genuine" and "double superfine" are the qualities particularly recommended for family use. Retail in every town throughout the United Kingdom.—**J. and J. COLMAN, 26, Cannon Street, London.**

**CAUTION.**—COCKS'S celebrated **READING SAUCE** for Fish, Game, Steaks, Soups, Gravies, Hot and Cold Meats, unrivalled for general use, sold by all respectable Dealers in Sauces. Is manufactured only by the Executors of the Sole Proprietor, Charles Cocks, 6, Duke Street, Reading, the Original Sauce Warehouse. All others are spurious imitations.

**TWO THOUSAND** best **SILVER WATCHES**, 25s. each; 500 gold ditto, 56s. each, all warranted; 1,000 Solid Gold Guard Chains and Albert Chains, 16s. 6d. each; Gold Gem Rings and Signet ditto, 4s. each; 1,500 Solid Gold Scarf Pins, 5s. 6d. each; Gold Brooches, Earrings, Studs, and every kind of Jewellery, at a similar reduction. Country orders, per remittances, carefully attended to.—**George Dyer, 90, Regent Street, London.**

**WATCHES and CLOCKS.**—**FREDC. HAWLEY** (Successor to Thomas Hawley), many years Watchmaker, by special appointment, to his late Majesty George IV., invites inspection of his carefully-finished Stock, at 148, Regent Street, W. Elegant Gold watches, £2 15s. to £35; Silver Watches, £1 5s. to £12 12s. Eight-day Timepieces, 12s. 6d. Clocks, striking hours and half-hours, £2 15s. and upwards.—**FREDERICK HAWLEY, Watchmaker, 148, Regent Street, W. (from the Strand and Coventry Street). Established nearly a century. Merchants and Shippers supplied.**

**BRANDY.**—The Best and Cheapest in the World. Cognac, 15s. per gallon; one dozen, 33s. Champagne, 18s. per gallon; one dozen, 39s. This splendid Brandy cannot be equalled. Best London Gin, full strength, 13s. per gallon; one dozen, 29s. The above prices per dozen include railway carriage.—**G. PHILLIPS and CO., Distillers, Holborn Hill, London.**

**KINAHAN'S LL WHISKY v. COGNAC BRANDY.**—This Celebrated Old Irish Whisky rivals the finest French Brandy. It is pure, mild, mellow, delicious, and very wholesome. Sold in bottles, 3s. 8d., at the retail houses in London; by the agents in the principal towns in England; or wholesale at 8, Great Windmill Street, London, W.—Observe the red seal, pink label, and cork branded "Kinahan's LL Whisky."

**M. R. HARTY, Surgeon-Dentist**, by a new Process **REPLACES TEETH** in the mouth without any pain or inconvenience to the patient. He is only to be consulted at his residence, 41, St. Martin's Lane, Trafalgar Square. Painless extraction if required. Moderate charges.

**LIFE ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND.**—Chairman in London—Sir WM. DUNBAR, of Mochrum, Bart., M.P.

While affording all the advantages and facilities usual with other Offices, this institution possesses special and attractive features peculiar to itself; and during the twenty-six years of its operations it has largely contributed to the extension of Life Assurance throughout the whole of Great Britain and Ireland.

The system and regulations have been framed, and from time to time improved, so as to secure to the policyholders not only the utmost value for their payments, but especially the following:

As small present outlay as possible.  
No Responsibility, whether of Partnership or Mutual Assurance.

No liability to Forfeiture, or so little that only gross carelessness can affect the policy.

A liberal return to the policy-holder, if he desire to relinquish his policy; or,

The loan of a sum nearly equal to its office value without cancelling the policy.

The eminent usefulness of the institution is apparent from its having paid policies on deceased lives amounting, during last year alone, to

**NINETY THOUSAND POUNDS.**

One whole Year's Ranking for Profits over all later entrants will be secured by Assuring before 5th April.

**THOS. FRASER, Resident Secretary.**  
London (Chief Office), 20, King William Street, City; (West End Office), 48, Pall Mall, S.W.

**CLERICAL, MEDICAL, and GENERAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY, 13, St. James's Square, London, S.W.**—Established 1824.

**FINANCIAL RESULTS OF THE SOCIETY'S OPERATIONS.**  
The annual income exceeds ... .. £201,000  
The Assurance Fund safely invested, is over ... .. 1,446,000

The New Policies in the last year were 466, assuring ... .. 271,440

The Bonus added to Policies at the last division was ... .. 275,077

The total claims by death paid amount to 1,962,629

The following are among the distinctive features of the society:

Credit System.—On any policy for the whole of life, where the age does not exceed 60, one-half of the annual premiums during the first five years may remain on credit, and may either continue as a debt on the policy, or be paid off at any time.

Low Rates of Premium for Young Lives, with early participation in profits.

Endowment Assurances may be effected, without profits, by which the sum assured becomes payable on the attainment of a specified age, or at death, whichever event shall first happen.

Invalid Lives may be assured at rates proportioned to the increased risk.

Prompt Settlement of Claims.—Claims paid thirty days after proof of death.

The Reversionary Bonus at the Quinquennial Division in 1862 averaged 48 per cent., and the Cash Bonus 28 per cent. on the premiums paid in the five years.

The next Division of Profits will take place in January, 1867, and persons who effect new policies before the end of June next will be entitled at that division to one year's additional share of profits over later entrants.

Tables of rates and forms of proposal can be obtained of any of the Society's agents, or of

**GEORGE CUTCLIFFE, Actuary and Secretary.**  
13, St. James's Square, London, S.W.

**THE LAND SECURITIES COMPANY (Limited).**

The Company **ISSUE MORTGAGE DEBENTURES**, bearing 4½ per cent interest, payable half-yearly, at the Bankers of the Company in London, or at such Country Bankers as may be arranged with the holders, payable at such periods and for such amounts as may suit investors. The aggregate amount of the debentures at any time issued is strictly limited to the total amount of the moneys for the time being, secured to the Company by carefully selected mortgages, of which a register is kept at the Company's Chief Office, open to inspection by debentureholders. The holders have, moreover, the security of the large uncalculated capital of the Company, which amounts at present to £900,000. These debentures, therefore, combining the advantages of a good mortgage with ready convertibility, will be found a perfectly safe and convenient investment.

The Company accept money on deposit in the smallest or largest sums, at interest, in anticipation of investment in the mortgage debentures, and they undertake the negotiation of special investments, to suit exceptional circumstances.

Apply to the Managing Director, Land Securities Company, No. 32, Charing Cross, S.W.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FRED C.—We beg to decline with thanks the lines on "Lord Palmerston," which reached us too late.

NELLAR STREET.—The popular *equitienne* in question is an American; but we cannot reply to other queries.

HELEN WINSTAY.—Cleanliness, i.e., soap and water—is an infallible recipe in both cases.

A. S.—An action for breach of promise may be supported on verbal and general evidence, and also by the tenor of any correspondence that may have taken place.

G. D.—The communication will be considered as quite confidential; and the request be attended to, should opportunity offer.

GEORGE HARRY D.—The "pitting" marks left by small-pox are ineradicable. The handwriting is good, and well adapted for any business occupation.

WALTER F., who is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, dark, and very good looking, is desirous of meeting with a young lady, twenty years of age, or younger, and thoroughly domesticated, willing to venture on matrimony with him.

C. M. C.—The episode of Italian life is very fairly narrated, and its treatment gives promise of considerable literary ability; but the subject is too fragmentary, and the *feuilleton* is therefore declined, with many thanks.

ARTHUR WILLIAM HYBERG.—Your first question is one which we could not reasonably be expected to answer publicly. To the other we reply that your handwriting is tolerably good.

A. C. R.—The walnut hair dye (for the receipt for which we gave in a recent number) may be applied with a sponge on half-brush, the hair being properly washed and cleaned previously.

L. B.—A respectable tradesman's son, twenty-five years of age, with light brown hair and blue eyes, is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, and tolerably good-looking, would like to correspond matrimonially with a brunette about twenty years of age.

LOUIS ROSE would like to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman. Is twenty years of age, very prepossessing in appearance, having auburn hair, hazel eyes, and fresh complexion, is very good tempered, and respectably connected.

NELLY S., who is just eighteen years of age, tall, of fair complexion, with blue eyes and brown hair, would like to correspond with a gentleman, who must be tall, well educated, and possess an income of £200 a year.

FRED. B.—The first marriage being legally performed, the fact of its having been kept secret from the relations of both parties would not invalidate it; and nothing further is legally necessary.

ANNIE LEE, who is in her eighteenth year, rather tall, with brown hair and hazel eyes, desires to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman in a respectable position, who must be tall, and really gentlemanly in appearance.

S. O. S.—The name "Miniores" is derived from the name of a convent founded in the locality in 1293, for the reception of ladies of the Order of St. Clare, and called the Convent of the Minoras. This name was afterwards corrupted into Miniores.

BECKIE, who is seventeen years of age, of medium height, very dark, with grey eyes and dark hair, and is very amiable, wishes with a view to matrimony, to correspond with a gentleman, who must be tall and dark, not more than twenty-five years of age, and in good circumstances.

DESIROUS is desirous of opening a matrimonial correspondence with a gentleman (fair preferred). Is twenty-four years of age, domesticated, though fond of society, tall and fair, with full blue eyes, black hair, a good complexion, and a merry and affectionate disposition.

ANNA and LIZZIE, sisters, would like to correspond matrimonially with two gentlemen. "Anna" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 1 in. in height, of fair complexion, and considered good-looking, and both are thoroughly domesticated.

ANNIE and MARY are willing to receive matrimonial overtures. "Annie" is twenty years of age, of medium height, with fair complexion, black hair and blue eyes, and is inclined to *embourgeois*. "Mary" is nineteen years of age, rather above the medium height, with fair complexion, light brown hair, and blue eyes.

C. S. W., who is 5 ft. 2 in. in height, of fair complexion, with auburn hair, and dark brown eyes, wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence with a gentleman about twenty years of age; good looks not absolutely essential—good moral principles being preferred—and a tradesman not objected to.

CHARLIE and WILLIE, feeling the discomforts of single life, long for partners, who would not only combine grace and elegance with general domesticity, but also prove loving, confiding, and affectionate wives. "Charlie" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, with dark hair and

eyes, slight moustache, and is very good tempered, well connected, and in receipt of £170 per annum. The lady should have fair hair, and be not more than twenty-one years of age. "Willie" is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, with auburn hair, is very good tempered, and has large whiskers, and moustache, and would prefer a young lady with dark hair.

MISS ELIZABETH and CAROLINE will be pleased to entertain matrimonial overtures from two gentlemen. The former is twenty-two years of age, of medium height, with fair complexion, blue eyes, and dark brown hair. The latter is eighteen years of age, of medium height, inclined to *embourgeois*, with fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair.

HARRIET C. and JENNY E. would like to correspond with two respectable tradesmen (if dark and tall preferred). "Harriet C." is eighteen years of age, of fair complexion, with dark eyes and brown curly hair. "Jenny E." is eighteen years of age, with dark complexion, black curly hair, and black eyes.

A BACHELOR, thirty-five years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, with dark brown hair and whiskers, a manufacturer with a moderate income, desires to correspond matrimonially and exchange *carte de visite* with a respectable business lady from twenty-five to thirty years of age, and possessing some means.

MYRTLE, who is of medium height, with blue eyes, and wavy golden hair, wishes to correspond matrimonially and exchange *carte* with a young gentleman, tall, handsome, clever, and possessing sufficient means to keep a wife in good style. "Myrtle" is of a good family, and considered highly accomplished.

IVY, a young lady of very good family, and fully accomplished, of medium height, with hazel eyes and auburn hair, desires to form a matrimonial alliance with a young gentleman of fortune, who must be tall (but personal beauty a secondary consideration to beauty of mind), be possessed of a cultivated intellect and a gentlemanly address.

## BEAUTY AND LOVE.

They used to call me beautiful—  
I had nothing else besides.

There was none more great or wise than he  
In all the world so wide!

And it's still a sort of pleasure,  
Very mournful though it be,

To know he once could think such thoughts  
And write such words to me.

But my poor beauty faded—  
'Twas the only gift I had.

I was always weak and foolish,  
And my whole life grew sad.

For the cruel lightning fever  
Left me pitiful to see—

Oh! it's true that "beauty's fleeting"—  
And my love no more loved me.

A. Z.

OCTOBER, who is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, with dark brown hair and whiskers, and eyes of same colour, would like to correspond matrimonially and exchange *carte de visite* with a young lady from about seventeen to nineteen years of age, who must not object to at least three years courtship. Good looks of no consideration.

ISAAC and LILY would be happy to correspond matrimonially with two young gentlemen, who must be tall and dark, and passably good looking. "Isaac" is tall and commanding in figure, with fair complexion, dark hair, and black eyes. "Lily" is petite and fair, with golden hair and blue eyes. Both have good expectations, and are considered pretty.

MAT, who is between twenty-five and twenty-six years of age, tall, inclined to *embourgeois*, of fair complexion, with dark auburn hair, neither pretty nor plain, domesticated, fond of music, good tempered, of a home-loving disposition, and possessed of some property, will be glad to receive matrimonial overtures from a gentleman about thirty years of age, tall, fond of home, and a Protestant.

EMMA and MIRABELL wish to correspond with two young gentlemen, who must be tall and good looking, and of good birth. "G. R. W." is eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, with dark brown hair and light grey eyes, is accomplished, and the only daughter of a retired tradesman. "O. R. G." who is eighteen years of age, 4 ft. 9 in. in height, of fair complexion, with light blue eyes and brown hair, is accomplished, and the daughter of a very respectable tradesman.

ROSALIE MATTHEW, who is seventeen years of age, tall (in appearance resembling the Princess of Wales), with brown curly hair, and very expressive hazel eyes, is highly educated, accomplished, and possesses a fortune, is desirous of receiving a matrimonial *bulletin* from some highly-educated, handsome gentleman, of about twenty-five years of age, dark and good looking, of military figure, and possessed of adequate means.

G. R. W. and O. R. G. wish to correspond with two young gentlemen, who must be tall and good looking, and of good birth. "G. R. W." is eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, with dark brown hair and light grey eyes, is accomplished, and the only daughter of a retired tradesman. "O. R. G." who is eighteen years of age, 4 ft. 9 in. in height, of fair complexion, with light blue eyes and brown hair, is accomplished, and the daughter of a very respectable tradesman.

LOUIE and GILSEY are desirous of corresponding with two gentlemen between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-six, who must be tall, and have a moderate income. "Louie" is in her eighteenth year, 5 ft. 1 in. in height, has dark brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, and slight figure; is domesticated, and sings well. "Gilsey" is in her seventeenth year, is 5 ft. 1 in. in height, with brown wavy hair, hazel eyes, Grecian features, clear complexion, is *petite* in figure, merry in disposition, thoroughly domesticated, and a good musician.

ADA MAT and LOTTIE SINGLAI would be happy to enter into a matrimonial correspondence with two gentlemen. "Ada" is twenty-two years of age, tall, and very genteel looking, with dark hair and eyes, amiable, very domesticated, and would prefer a fair gentleman with blue eyes, tall, good tempered, and twenty-five years of age. "Lottie" who is twenty years of age, fair, and rather pretty, with blue eyes, and has a small fortune, prefers a dark gentleman, handsome, with pleasing manners and twenty-two years of age.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

C. H. O. will be happy to exchange addresses, &c. with "Myra," with a view to a matrimonial engagement.

P. B. D. requests the *carte de visite* of "T. D.," as a possible preliminary to a matrimonial correspondence.

A. H. F. wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence and exchange *carte*, &c. with "Marian F."

IMEX, thinking she should not hear any further from "Paul Dumont," notices that she has consequently formed an engagement with a gentleman in her native town.

EDWY I. would like to hear further from "M. F.," to whom he begs to offer himself. Is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, fair, and passably good looking.

A. H. will be happy to correspond and exchange *carte* with "Alphonso D. D.," a widower, with a view to matrimony. Is thirty-eight years of age, of genteel appearance, amiable in disposition, and very domesticated.

G. H. J. would very much like to correspond matrimonially with "S. E. M." Is fair, of middle height, amiable, and domesticated. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged as a preliminary.

ONE WHO PREFERS A BRUNETTE states in reply to "Ella" that he is twenty-eight years of age, and of fair complexion, has just commenced business as a goldsmith and jeweller, and would be glad to exchange *carte* as a preliminary.

ALAN, who is a gentleman, twenty years of age, of fair complexion, and has blue eyes, will be most happy to exchange *carte* and correspond with either "Fanny" or "Agnes."

FREDERICK CHAUVER and HIS BROTHER, who both are professional men, good looking, and thirty and twenty-five years of age respectively, would like to correspond and exchange *carte* with "Ella" and "Alicia."

ALAN, who is a gentleman, twenty years of age, of fair complexion, and has blue eyes, will be most happy to exchange *carte* and correspond with either "Fanny" or "Agnes."

G. would like to correspond with "Lizzie." Is thirty-one years of age, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, in a profession, but has only a very small income at present. He merely stipulates that the lady should possess intelligence and good temper.

L. R. thinks that "Louise" is just the lady to make him a suitable wife. Is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, and on the death of a relative will be in possession of an annual income.

C. L., a tradesman's son, would like to correspond and exchange *carte* with "Agnes." Is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, with brown hair and eyes, and considered passably good looking.

JOHN B., who is nineteen years of age, tall, of dark complexion, considered good looking, and very respectably connected, would like to correspond with "Alicia," with a view to matrimony.

J. M. D., who is twenty-five years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, light blue eyes and brown hair, is highly respectable, and in moderately good circumstances, would be happy to hear from either "Mary" or "Maggie," and would willingly exchange *carte*.

B. S. and F. P., twenty and twenty-one years of age respectively, both of whom are of respectable families, hold good mercantile positions, and are good looking, would be most happy to correspond and exchange *carte* with "Ella" and "Alicia."

ISABELLA MAED would be happy to hear from "Horace P.," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, with brown hair, blue eyes, rather pale complexion, a good temper, and an affectionate disposition; is also very domesticated, and has a yearly income.

FRANCES ANNE would be happy to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with "Uncomfortable" or "Belphégor." Is twenty-nine years of age, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, with dark brown hair, blue eyes, is good tempered, very domesticated, and has a small fortune besides a yearly income.

ESMERALD S. will exchange *carte* with either "Fanny" or "Agnes," and give every satisfaction as regards character, family and means, and should require the same; has property, independent of business, and hopes that there may be some forthcoming also on the lady's side.

A. P. W. will be most happy to hear from "Ella" or "Alicia," if still disengaged. Is twenty-three years of age, with a good income, is considered good looking, and of an affectionate disposition, highly respectable, and moves in good society; is steadily attached to a good religion.

FREDERICK A. L. responds to "Helen" that he is twenty years of age, good looking, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, has a comfortable competency at present and good expectations; is educated and accomplished, and will be happy to exchange *carte*.

L. M. would like to exchange *carte* with "T. D." Is seventeen years of age, considered very handsome, and aristocratic in manners, has dark brown hair, large grey eyes and slight figure, is of very good family, and an excellent musician.

ORANGE BLOSSOM requests the *carte de visite* of "T. D.," being quite fascinated with the description he has given of himself. "Orange Blossom" is just nineteen years of age, petite, very ladylike and prepossessing in appearance, good tempered, vivacious, warm-hearted, and passionately fond of music, but cannot play. (Handwriting of average merit.)

AGNES thinks she would make a good and loving wife either to "T. D." or "J. L." Is eighteen years of age, considered a pretty brunette, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, has been well educated, and is thoroughly domesticated; is passionately fond of music and singing, and is considered a pretty good musician; is co-heiress to a neat little fortune. *Carte de visite* requested as a preliminary.

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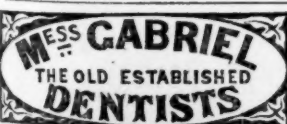
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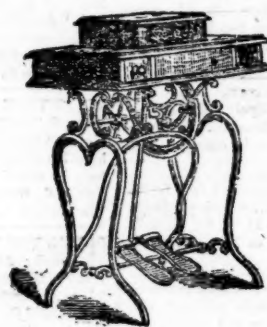
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